

New for PS2! Spy Hunter, Batman: Vengeance, Shadow Man 2

Lifecycle 2 Vol3 #6 06/01

Next Generation Magazine



# Next Gen

## GameCube's ROGUE LEADER ROGUE SQUADRON II

Our exclusive 10-page report  
will blow you away!

### REVIEWED:

Black & White  
Quake III PS2  
Z.O.E.

### INSIDE SEGA:

Multi-platform plans  
exposed AND  
new Dreamcast  
games revealed!

imagine  
MEDIA WITH PASSION



PlayStation 2 ■ PC ■ N64 ■ GameCube ■ Xbox ■ Dreamcast



TEEN  
**T**  
ESRB

Animated Violence

# THREE HEROES ONE ENEMY ALL ACTION

Inspired by LucasArts' rich *Star Wars* flight-game legacy, *STAR WARS STARFIGHTER* combines intense air and space combat in a fast-paced action-adventure. Live the lives of three fighter pilots in a series of harrowing missions to save the galaxy from the evil Trade Federation. Pilot extraordinary 3D vehicles—including the Naboo N-1 plus a variety of never-before-seen craft—through stunningly real worlds in 14-plus air and space missions.

## STAR WARS STARFIGHTER

PlayStation.2



[starfighter.lucasarts.com](http://starfighter.lucasarts.com)  
[starwars.com](http://starwars.com)





# NextGen

Next Generation Magazine

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Rogue Leader



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# 06/01



EDITORIAL

## Roll out the big games

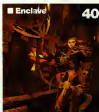


Well, we did it again. This time we brought you the world's first look at GameCube software, and it's a very impressive game at that. Our 10-page *Rogue Squadron II* story begins on page 56.

So the GameCube threat is real. Very real. And finally, at the May E3 trade show, all of this year's software should be revealed: GameCube's secret first-party launch games, Naughty Dog's first PS2 game, as well as some other Sony surprises. We're hoping Microsoft will reveal something for Xbox on par with *Metal Gear Solid 2*, or *Rogue Leader*. Because at this point, the software is competent, but nothing we've seen thus far makes us need an Xbox. (*Munch* and *Halo* are both still too early to qualify.)

PS2, GameCube, and Xbox will undergo the big E3 litmus test — rolling out their big games, all hoping to be picked the odds-on winner this holiday season. Who will be ready in time? Who's got the must-have games? The answers are coming in the July issue. For now, enjoy June, the Force is very strong in this one.

*Tom*  
— Tom Russo



Enclave 40



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# News

Game industry news and analysis



## ■ IT BEGINS

# Spring Tokyo Game Show 2001 Special Report

Xbox made an impact, but where were the games?  
(Hint: at Sony's booth)

➔ "The videogame business is a worldwide business," explained Bill Gates during his keynote speech at the 2001 Spring Tokyo Game Show. "But one key thing I want to make clear today is that we see Japan as the center of this business." These sentences

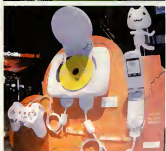
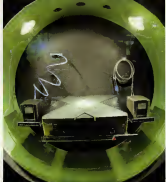
spoke volumes to the assembled crowd of thousands of Japanese and foreign journalists and game industry professionals assembled in the auditorium at Makuhari Messe during the first day of the show. Despite the naysayers, the pessimists, and everybody else who said it couldn't —

and perhaps shouldn't — be done, Microsoft made it clear that it is going to try to become a player in the Land of the Rising Sun with its new videogame console. To do that, the company needed to make an impact with the gamers themselves, who have been known for their fickle attitude towards

U.S. games and game systems. For three days, from March 30 to April 1, Microsoft took the chance to strut its stuff before an anxious, if skeptical, Japanese gaming public.

**The opening round of PR** artillery hit attendees as soon as they got off the train

and were swamped by people handing out Xbox-branded bags, with Xbox banners plastered everywhere you looked. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that Microsoft meant business, TGS-style. Even the placemats at the food court had smiling pictures of Bill Gates with an Xbox con-



troller in one hand and a burger in the other.

**The first real bombshell** hit just after the show began — Tecmo's *Dead or Alive 3* was already running on Xbox hardware and it looked fantastic. This demo was already impressive enough to convert a few fence-sitters. Next, Gates made some critical announcements during his keynote speech. First, the Xbox controller has been redesigned to be smaller, with a few buttons moved around, to appeal more to the Japanese market. Then he announced that Microsoft was teaming up with Sega to bring several new versions of Sega's existing franchises

to the Xbox platform. Out of 11 planned titles, four were mentioned by name: a new version of *Sega GT*, *Jet Set Radio Future*, *Gun Valkyrie*, and *Ranzer Dragoon* — although many noticed that the word "exclusive" was not used in connection with Sega's brands. Finally, Gates announced that Microsoft would be partnering with Japanese telecommunications giant NTT to make broadband gaming a reality.

However, one mistake Microsoft made was in opting to show some of the U.S. titles during the presentation. Unfortunately, the titles chosen were either unspectacular (*Amped* and *NFL Fever* need major work

on their animation), or not really suited to Japanese tastes (*Halo*). Indeed, you could hear some of the Japanese snickering in the background as these were shown. A demo of a Japanese first-party title, *Project KX*, looked nice, but there wasn't any actual gameplay yet, so it's hard to make any sort of judgement. Still *Dream Factory* is at the helm of this fighter so we have high hopes.

**Yet despite Microsoft's** announcements, the show mostly belonged to Sony for one reason: lots of games. While there was only one playable Xbox title on the floor (*Airforce Delta 2*, PS2 had dozens. The most antic-

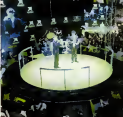


■ *Project KX* was the only Japanese first-party title shown

ipated of these, *Final Fantasy X* took up most of Squiresoft's booth and part of Sony's. Fans were not disappointed, lining up for a chance to get their hands on the controls, and the trailer alone on the big screen at Squiresoft's booth

generated enough buzz to make it the one must-see of the show. We would have liked to see that the gameplay had evolved more beyond previous FF titles, but we can't deny that the technology and production values were amazing.





The rest of Sony's booth was inevitably filled with sequels and knock-offs from both first and third parties, but it also housed one of the most original games of the show. Simply titled *Ka* (translated as "Mosquito"), the game places you in the role of a mosquito that has to suck blood from a pretty girl napping in her room. If you irritate her too much, she comes after you with bug spray or tries to squash you. While not a spectacular demonstration of technology like *FFX* or *Gran Turismo 3*, it stood out as something new and different, which is pretty unusual these days. Meanwhile, Konami was

showing a playable *Silent Hill 2*. The design team has actually managed made the graphics look very similar to 16mm film, with a grainy quality to the image that greatly enhances the game's horror movie atmosphere. Namco's *Ace Combat 4* also drew attention with its impressive terrain graphics and proven fighter-plane gameplay. Other titles of note included Sony's sci-fi survival horror game *Phase Parasoid*, *Gran Turismo 3 A Spec*, *Metrol Gear Solid 2* (present in demo form), Koel's wonderfully bizarre rhythm-action game *Guitaro Man*, and Aruze's horror RPG *Shadow Hearts*.

Sadly, Dreamcast appears to have all but dropped off the face of the planet. Only one publisher we saw, Capcom, had any games for the system, and of those, only the new version of *Capcom vs. SNK* looked interesting. Most were on par with the likes of *Heavy Metal Geomatrix*, which simply looked like *Spown* with different characters (for more on *Heavy Metal Geomatrix*, see *Milestones*, page 55).

**Last, but certainly not least**, both Bandai and Nintendo showed off their latest handheld systems, Bandai's *Wonderswan Color*

may be underpowered compared to *Game Boy Advance*, but it has a secret weapon in that Square is making all the old *Final Fantasy* games available for it. Still, that left Nintendo's GBA with titles from almost every other major publisher on the floor besides Square, and many of them, like *Capcom's Super Street Fighter II* and *Namco's Klonoo*, looked quite nice.

But underneath all the hype and hoopla, TGS was really only the opening salvo of what will be a very hard war later this year. Sony developers are obviously starting to ramp up, but some are clearly still

wrestling with the highly complicated architecture. Microsoft, meanwhile, had the right idea with its TGS media blitz, but didn't quite succeed in convincing the Japanese game industry at large that Xbox should be the system of choice late this year. Microsoft needs more big, exclusive titles — hopefully these will be at E3. And don't forget about *GameCube*, which, though not present at TGS — Nintendo has its own show in Japan, *Spaceworld* — will no doubt come on strong at E3 with a slew of first-party titles. This should be a very interesting year.

— Blake Fischer

## ■ BITS FROM THE EDGE

# News Bytes

→ **We'd like to just drop it in the "weird" file without comment, but, hey, we're News Bytes.** What was up with Nintendo VP of Sales and Marketing Peter Main's letter to retailers? You know the one that simply asked them why they were displaying marketing materials from a company that doesn't even make consoles. (No, not Sega

— Microsoft: See, the company hasn't made a console yet, so in Nintendo's eyes, apparently this whole Xbox thing is just an unsubstantiated rumor) It was the kind of letter we'd expect from the old, restraint-of-trade, monopolistic Nintendo — not the new, competitive Nintendo. Still, we'd love to see a chart correlating allocation

of GBA units and Xbox point-of-purchase displays.

**Speaking of Nintendo, equally asinine was Saudi Arabia's decision to ban Pokémon, as it features, apparently, Stars of David, crosses, and freemason symbols and is, at its essence, gambling.** Innocent kids' game, or demonic plot

designed to undermine Islam? You be the judge.

**It seems Microsoft has been judged and found lacking in the honesty department, at least based on screenshots, as it released doctored screens of its new snowboarding game on the web.** Note to Microsoft: If you're going to doctor your screens

(an all too common occurrence, as readers who saw the *Next Gen* exposé on the subject a few months back will remember), don't add less than five! Lens flare looks like crap, and it's also extremely easy to identify Adobe Photoshop lens flare — as you've now figured out after reading the virulent uproar on forums all over the web.



■ FERRARI OR VOLVO?

# GeForce3 arrives

The new super-accelerator is here, so how does it measure up?

**Platform:** PC, Mac  
**Manufacturer:** Nvidia  
**MSRP:** \$500 (est.)

➔ The wait for GeForce3 is finally over, but at a steep \$500 (more or less), it does beg the question whether the boost is really worth the money. The answer, as you might expect, depends.

In terms of both benchmarks and real-world 3D performance (i.e. 3DMark

2001 and Quake III, the 64MB

GeForce3 definitely out-performed

the 64MB GeForce2, although the difference was not extreme under most "normal" conditions. GeForce3's main advantage over GeForce2 is in running at screen resolutions of 1024x768 and above in 32-bit color. The jump was readily apparent in QIII — even with all the bells and whistles turned on and at extreme resolutions like 1600x1200, frame-rates continued to hover between 45 and 55fps on an Intel PIII 1GHz machine using DirectX 8. Oddly

though, GeForce3's OpenGL performance wasn't even as good as GeForce2's, but no doubt this is due to the late beta version status of the GeForce3 drivers we were provided. Release boards and software will doubtless improve performance significantly.

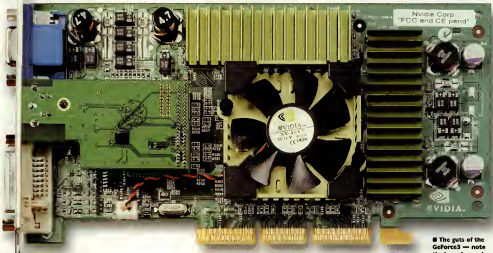
Besides the bump in speed, GeForce3 also adds support for high-resolution Quincunx anti-aliasing, environment bump-mapping, and pixel shading — none of which we've

actually seen in a current game. Further, there's very little way right now to test or even demonstrate GeForce3's most intriguing new feature, its fully programmable nVidieFX GPU. In time, developers will use it for all kinds of graphics tricks that will dazzle and delight, but right now the hardware has clearly outpaced software development.

So is it worth it? Well, if you're a Next Gen reader, chances are you're going to want the best and the

fastest regardless, and GeForce3 is clearly that. On the other hand, if you already own a 64MB GeForce2, the modest jump in performance when running most current games may not be worth the high price. GeForce3 is definitely worth having, but for some, it might be better to wait a few months for the price to come down, and for a few games to show up that take advantage of its more spectacular feature sets.

— Jeff Lundrigan



■ The guts of the GeForce3 — note the huge fan and added cooling fins

**On the subject of glaringly obvious, you'd think someone at LucasArts could have checked before they titled their Star Wars Starfighter game — which 3DO is claiming violates its Star Fighter trademark. And you'd think 3DO might drop a letter to a LucasArts lawyer before using. Come on 3DO, you're looking a little like**

Atari with the lawsuits already. Having the Star Wars name associated with Star Fighter isn't going to cost you any sales, trust us.

**Speaking of looking like Atari — specifically, the Jaguar, circa 1997 — the Dreamcast is dying faster than anything; if it doesn't have more canceled titles**

**than titles left coming out for it soon, we'll be surprised.** It's a shame, since it still has the best-looking and most fun games of any system. Phantasy Star Online is already approaching the highest penetration of a non-launch game among a system's installed base in history, and we haven't even seen the expansion yet!

**On the topic of expansion, or lack thereof, EA killed Ultima Online 2, so it could, according to its own press release, get more short-term gains by sucking the marrow out of UO. EA laid off hundreds of online staff, and then — no joke — hosted a huge job booth at GDC, advertising prominently for people to work on online**

projects. Now, we're not experts, but maybe some of those online people you just laid off could do some of those online jobs you're hiring for...

**And speaking of layoffs, it's time to lay off our ranting. Until next time...**

— Compiled by Carrie Shepherd, Executive News Editor, DailyRadar.com

■ CROWDED HOUSE

# GDC 2001

Everybody who's anybody in the industry converged on the 15th annual Game Developers Conference



■ This year's GDC drew attendees from more than 44 countries

## INDEPENDENT GAMES FESTIVAL WINNERS

Seumas McNally Grand Prize  
*Shattered Galaxy*  
Nexon

Audience Award  
*Shattered Galaxy*  
Nexon

Best Audio  
*Chase Ace 2*  
Space Time Foam

Best Design  
*Shattered Galaxy*  
Nexon

Best Visual Art  
*Hardwood Spades*  
Silver Creek

Technical Excellence  
*Shattered Galaxy*  
Nexon



■ *Shattered Galaxy* won four of the six IGF awards

→ The business of buying and selling games may be in a slump during the transition year, but the business of creativity has never been stronger. Although the Game Developers Conference, held March 20-24 in San Jose, CA, showcased cutting-edge development tools and the usual assortment of free swag, the real draw was the invaluable information available to attendees. Whether you attended Max's Chief Designer Will Wright's lecture on game design inspiration or Insomniac President Ted Price's presentation on how to get a game published, you were sure to benefit from the experience of the industry's greatest minds.

"GDC does a good job in reflecting the state of the industry," said GDC Director Alan Yu. "We're past the

point of unbridled optimism with the new consoles and bucking down to make those ideas a reality, just look at the sessions — people were primarily interested in the implementation of techniques, like coding vector units on PS2 or dealing with the Xbox unified

memory architecture."

A highlight of the show was the all-star cast assembled to discuss the future of PC and console gaming, which included Electronic Arts COO Bing Gordon, Sony Computer Entertainment Europe SVP Phil Harrison, Elixir Studios President Dennis Hassabli, Microsoft VP Ed Fries, Naughty Dog President Jason Rubin, Sony Online President Kelly Rock, and Ensemble Game Designer Bruce Shelley. Moderated by 3DO President Trip Hawkins, the panel featured some heated and passionate opinions — between wisecracks and one-liners, of course.

Xbox was again a frequent topic of discussion, and Microsoft's Advanced Technology Group Director Seamus Blackley was on hand to share that over 12 games were slated for launch, and the console was on schedule for this fall — he even shared pictures of the massive Xbox manufacturing plant.

EA colander Bing Gordon drew a big crowd for his lecture on the internet as a gaming platform. He boldly predicted that broadband console gaming networks would not be viable until the launch of PlayStation 3 and Xbox 2.

Many developers left this year's GDC with renewed enthusiasm toward their work, and with good reason: The industry's tank is full of talent, and its engine is rewiring and ready to go. — Kevin Toyono

## AIAS AWARD WINNERS

Game of the Year  
*Diablo II*

Console Innovation  
*Sherman*

PC Innovation  
*Deus Ex*

Lifetime Achievement Award  
John Carmack  
id Software

CONSOLE WINNERS:  
Console Game of the Year  
*SSX*

Action/Adventure  
*Zelda: Majora's Mask*

Fighting  
*Dead or Alive 2*

Racing  
*SSX*

RPG  
*Final Fantasy IX*

Sports  
*SSX*

PC WINNERS:  
Game of the Year  
*Diablo II*

Action/Adventure  
*Deus Ex*

RPG  
*Diablo II*

Sports (tie)

FIFA 2001  
*Motocross Madness 2*

Strategy  
*Age of Empires II: The Conquerors*



■ Warren Spector and the Deus Ex team



■ Always full of surprises, EA co-founder Bing Gordon took the opportunity to announce both PlayStation 3 and Xbox 2 in his GDC speech. Bing didn't have any release dates for us

■ Maxis Chief Designer Will Wright

Game Developers Conference



## GDC AWARD WINNERS

**Lifetime Achievement Award**  
Will Wright  
Maxis

**Rookie Studio Award**  
Counter-Strike Team

**IGDA Award for Community Contribution**  
John Carmack

**Original Game Character of the Year**  
Scamm  
Yook Suh

**Excellence in Audio**  
Diablo II  
Matt Uelken  
Jason Hayes  
Glenn Stafford  
Andrus Pashko

**Excellence in Game Design**  
Deus Ex  
Harvey Smith  
Warren Spector

**Excellence in Level Design**  
American McGee's Alice  
American McGee  
Jim Mollisets & Team

**Excellence in Programming**  
The Sims  
The Sims Programming Team

**Excellence in Visual Arts**  
Jet Grind Radio  
Ryuuta Ueda  
Kazuki Hosokawa

**Game of the Year**  
The Sims  
The Sims Team

**Game Spotlight Awards**  
(games that demonstrate innovation and advancement in the state of the art of the interactive entertainment industry)  
Counter-Strike  
Counter-Strike Team  
Crazy Taxi  
Htruuker  
Deus Ex  
ION Screen Austin  
Jet Grind Radio  
Swabbie  
No One Lives Forever  
Mancibit

**The Most Promising Award**  
Habitat 67  
Chris Carbo (Lead/FPO)  
Chip Morrison  
Randy Farmer



■ **IGDA Software's John Carmack (top) and Valve's Gabe Newell**



■ **Nughty Do's President Jason Rubin shares tips on how to run a well-oiled development team**

■ **1. One of the popular round-table discussions at GDC 3. Factor 5 President Julian Eggbrecht and Epic Lead Designer Cliff B. 3. Xbox XTO Scamus Blackley 4. Iain McCalg talks about character design 5. One member of the Rainbow Studios team thinks they're number one in the industry, but a couple votes they're number two (and there's even one vote for number five) 6. Xbox Director of Third Party Kevin Backus and Sony VP of Marketing/Third-party Andrew House 7. Videogame soundtrack composer Tommy Tallarico and Masaya Matsuzaki, the creator of Furusago the Rapper 8. Immersion's Sr. Director of Development Dean Chang, Lionhead's Sr. Programmer Jonny Barnes, and Next Gen editor Eric Bratcher 9. Epic President Mark Rein and EA's Sr. Studios President Dennis Hassall**



■ **10. Sony Online Pres. Kelly Flock and Greg Ruczer 11. Kohno's Kyle "Carl Malone" Holt, Crystal Dynamics' Noah Hughes, and Dell Siefert, lead designer of Ghee Barker's Undying 12. The Epic team shows its secret to making great games 13. Incogitro Pres. Scott Campbell, Kodiak CEO Jonathan Slager, and Xbox VP Ed Fries 14. Blowware co-CEO Ray Musyka, Sierra Sr. PR Manager Genevieve Ostergard, Next Gen BIC Tom Russo, Gas Powered Games Pres. Chris Taylor, and Blowware co-CEO Greg Zeschuk 15. Nintendo consultant Darren Smith, NOA VP Purrin Kaplan, and NOA's Jim Herrick (AKA. Secret Online Project Guy) 16. Microsoft's GDC party 17. Corei Games' Michael John and Mark Cerry 18. Liquid Creative Dir Paul Culp and Gas Powered Games' Taylor**



# GameCube Watch

06/01

## Bad blood made good (probably), and one dead game

→ By now you know that Star Wars is officially coming to GameCube and that it looks spectacular (see page 56). But LucasArts isn't the only company throwing support behind Nintendo's console.

### So Happy Together

Industry watchers know that Nintendo and Namco had a falling out in 1989 when Nintendo President Hiroshi Yamauchi refused to cut Namco a sweet deal on software licensing. The split all but eliminated any Namco support for a Nintendo console.

However, sources allege that EAD Designer Shigeru Miyamoto visited Namco's offices last year to improve relations with the firm and to gain its support as a GameCube developer. While these rumors remain unconfirmed, something has definitely turned Namco on to GameCube. "Nintendo has limited its target audience as well as kept the same concepts alive from the original Famicom [NES] era to now,



■ This is an actual screenshot from a level of Retro's cancelled *Car Combat* game



■ Namco is developing *Tekken Tag for GameCube*. Will it look as good as it does here on PS2?

It's just great!" Namco Managing Director Yasuhiko Asada recently told the

Japanese magazine *Fornibus*. "We are very interested in Nintendo's GameCube as one of our target machines because it will have a strong influence in changing the current user groups — and it means more things created by Nintendo."

Sources say that *Ridge Racer V* and *Tekken Tag Tournament* are up and running on GameCube, but Namco is debating whether to show them at E3.

### U.S. Launch On Track

In a recent chat, NGA VP of Marketing George Harrison fatly dismissed speculation that GameCube would see another delay. "GameCube is definitely going to ship this year," he stressed, explaining that just because some smaller software houses haven't received dev kits, it doesn't mean Nintendo isn't serious about the launch. "A third party that has just received development hardware and says, 'I can't make a game by the end of 2001 so they

won't launch GameCube' is not keeping focused on what's really important for us, which is that we have to have the best-possible exclusive software for the launch this October."

### Gone But Not Forgotten

Last month we reported on the turmoil at Retro Studios and the cancellation of a project codenamed *Car Combat*. The game, which was to be a launch title, was killed when Nintendo made Retro refocus its efforts on *Metrodroid* and the action RPG also in development.

Now a leak within the company has brought us a first, and perhaps final and only, glimpse of the game. This screenshot comes from a level of the game Retro internally dubbed its "Twisted Metal Block killer" *Would Car Combat* have materialized with such lush visuals? We'll never know.

Next month we'll bring you some of the great GameCube software unveiled at E3. **NextGen**



■ Matt Casamassina, the biggest GameCube sleuth in the videogame industry, is the editor-in-chief of IGN64.com

### MATT'S E3 PREDICTIONS

Here's a list, by company, of GameCube games Matt predicts will be shown at E3:

**Nintendo (EAD)**  
*Luigi's Mansion* (search)  
*Zelda GameCube* (no votes)  
*Pokémon GameCube* (has 1 to 3 more screenshot games)

**Nintendo (NST)**  
*WaveRace GameCube*

**Rareware**  
*Perfect Dark 2*  
*Dinosaur Planet / Star Fox Adventures* (search)  
*Secret "Weird" Game* (search)

**Retro Studios**  
*Metrodroid FFA* (search)  
*Sword & Sorcery RPG* (search, shot for search, but will be delayed)

**Silicon Knights**  
*Too Many*  
*Eternal Darkness* (search)

**Left Field Productions**  
*Kobe Bryant GameCube*  
*Snowboarding GameCube* (search)

**Factor 5**  
*Thornado*  
*Star Wars Rogue Squadron 2* (search)

**Electronic Arts**  
*NFL Madden 2002* (search)  
*SSX Special Edition* (search)  
*FIFA 2002 Major League Soccer*

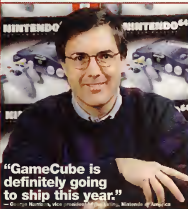
**Capcom Entertainment**  
*Resident Evil Zero* (search)  
*Secret Project*

**Namco**  
*Ridge Racer V*  
*Tekken Tag Tournament*

**Sega**  
*NFL2KX* (search)  
*Sonic the Hedgehog GameCube*

**Camelot**  
*RPG*

**Hatigai**  
*Ryujin No Doshin*



■ GO OUTSIDE AND GET SOME FRESH AIR

# PSOne — Now it's portable

Look out Game Boy Advance. Thanks to third-party screens and a rechargeable battery pack, PSOne can finally offer gaming on the go

➔ Despite its compact size and cute design, the standard model PSOne isn't really portable. Sure, you can carry it around, but you can also carry your toaster, and if we found a brand new 36-inch Sony Wega on the road side, you can believe we'd find a way to carry that too. But without a portable screen and power supply, you haven't been able to play your PSOne on a park bench, so it hasn't been truly portable — until now.

## Interact PSOne Mobile Monitor

MSRP: \$129.99

➔ There's been some confusion about similarities between this and Pelican's screen (shown below). Trust us — this one is clearly superior. The 4-inch screen (3 1/4" x 2 1/2" viewable) gives a lush, clear image, with all controls — brightness, contrast, etc. — conveniently front-mounted. The speakers are adequate, and with composite inputs, it can work with other consoles or video players.

Rating: ★★★★★

■ Interact has just announced a battery pack and a \$179 5-inch screen. We hope it's as nice as this 4-inch model

## Innovation Rechargeable Battery Pack

MSRP: \$59.99

➔ You'll need one of these big, ugly buggers in order to make your PSOne a true "go anywhere" machine. It's particularly nice when used with Innovation's LCD screen, which it locks onto. There's only one problem, but it's huge: The battery life is only about two hours, after which time you'll need a good four to five hours to recharge it.

Rating: ★☆☆☆☆

■ Innovation's Rechargeable Battery Pack. Enjoy it while it lasts

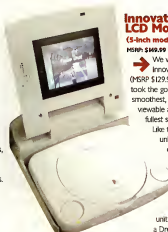
## Pelican PSOne Game Screen

MSRP: \$149.99

➔ With a 3" x 2 1/2" viewable area, it's the smallest screen we tested. Moreover, the picture showed notable graininess and serious color banding around light sources. The speakers sounded shrill and distorted, and the tint and color controls could only be turned with a screwdriver. Lastly while the unit ships with a custom car adapter (as does the Interact screen), it was the only one that couldn't share the PSOne power source, so forget about using Innovation's portable battery pack.

Rating: ★☆☆☆☆

■ Pelican's screen works, but it just isn't as high-quality or user-friendly as competing models



## Innovation Full-Color LCD Monitor

(5-inch model)

MSRP: \$169.99

➔ We weren't able to test Innovation's 4-inch offering (MSRP \$129.99), but its 5-inch monitor took the gold medal, offering the smoothest, richest picture, the largest viewable area (4 1/8" x 3"), and the fullest sound of any unit tested.

Like the Interact screen, this unit can handle any standard component input. The casing actually wraps protectively around the PSOne (though we would have liked screws to secure the union) making the whole unit almost exactly the size of a Dreamcast.

■ If you can find the Innovation screen, it's the best one out there

Rating: ★★★★★

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# The X-FILES

## Japan: no love lost on Xbox

→ Watching Microsoft trying to crack the Japanese videogames market is like going on safari and watching an amorous rhino trying to seduce a Land Rover. You admire the effort of the former and chuckle at the complete indifference of the latter. And like the rhino and the Rover, Microsoft and Japan just don't seem destined for each other — for a lot of reasons.

Japan's stagnant economy has not grown more than one percent in the last six years, with the

yen at a 30-month low this spring. The videogame market in particular is slumping because of the massive proliferation of cell phones. The Japanese have fallen in love with the ability to check email and web pages while on the train ride home. Add some nifty little arcade games to those cellular gizmos, and you have casual gamers who have moved their luxury money from videogames to the expensive monthly bills of a cell phone.

The Japanese are profoundly unimpressed by



The popularity of cell phone games has muddled Japan's videogame market, only making it tougher for Xbox



■ Jim Preston isn't just an all-around swell guy with a Ph.D. in philosophy — he's also an Xbox/PC editor for Daily Radar

"It's possible that the markets could simply split," Microsoft honcho Ed Fries says, "but that's not something I want to see happen." And with good reason, too, as conventional wisdom says that it isn't possible to win a console war without lots of Japanese support.

But could conventional wisdom be wrong? No console has ever before had what Microsoft has: the deep pockets needed to fight a war of attrition, and the support of some of the best developers for PC. Finally, Epic, id, Lionhead and others will have a closed PC-based platform, but with console-sized sales. And as great as the Japanese developers are, PC developers know net code better than anyone, which is great news for broadband-ready Xbox.

Everyone knows that the battle is not for 2002, but 2006. The real fight is for the fourth and fifth years of a console's life, the so-called "gray" years, and Microsoft is well positioned for that long haul. The Japanese may blithely ignore Xbox for the next couple of years, but if Microsoft does a good job in North America and Europe, then the Land Rover may have to come looking for the rhino. **NextGen**

U.S.-developed games. The PC market is nonexistent in Japan — not surprising given that Boltur's Gate II goes for \$100 while Dokotono is "only" \$75 in Akihabara. Console games don't fare much better; SSX is the best-selling American-made PlayStation 2 game in Japan, but its unit sales are relatively unimpressive. Microsoft's partnership with Sega is a great move, but Sony

ensured that it got Virtuo Fighter 4 and Crazy Taxi 2, leaving Xbox with Sega's lesser brands.

**Even if Xbox isn't (as it is likely to be) the most expensive platform on the market when it arrives, it's launching against a tough lineup from all sides.** PlayStation 2 will have Gran Turismo 3 in the late spring, Final Fantasy X in the summer, and Metal Gear Solid 2 in the fall. Game Boy Advance has already set record sales in Japan, and more games will be arriving every week. Plus, if the tea leaves are to be believed, GameCube will arrive this autumn and with another masterpiece by Shigeru Miyamoto. So what are the chances of Microsoft selling expensive Xboxes in the competitive and shrinking videogame market of Japan's stagnant economy with no killer apps?

At this point, snowballs and hell come to mind. But does that mean doom for Xbox? Not at all. It is conceivable that Xbox could just dominate the U.S. and European markets, with no presence in Japan.



While Microsoft has managed to partner with Sega to bring a number of titles to Xbox, certain boy orles like Virtuo Fighter and Crazy Taxi unfortunately aren't among them

# In the Studio

Development news as it develops

## KROME'S SHINY NEW TIGER

→ Krome Studios is looking to give Chester Cheetah a swift kick in the ass with its next project. We went behind closed doors at GDC with the Brisbane, Australia-based studio to take a look the company's new next-generational character-based adventure. The game stars Ty the Tasmanian Tiger, an actual species of tiger that once existed in the Australian Outback. Early gameplay revealed Ty wielding a pair of boomerangs — rather impressively, we might add — and the demo level boasted solid technology for a game that's so very, very early in development. At press time, Krome was negotiating rights for the title with several publishers.

## MORE PC GAMES GO PS2

→ Xbox isn't the only console with PC ports. Word is that Eidos is readying a special PS2 version of *Deus Ex*, while Gathering of Developers also plans *Max Payne* for PS2 (being worked on at RockStar Canada).



■ Max Payne

## XBOX'S SHARPER IMAGE

→ Japanese publishers may not have jumped on board Xbox (yet!), but many Japanese developers certainly have. One project we're particularly keen to hear more about is Lightswight's newest swordfighting sim, *Kongo: Legacy of the Blade*. The newest installment in the series will not only feature a cleaned-up and improved graphics engine, but, from what we understand, a return to more of the fighting style seen in the original *Bushido Blade* — complete with one hit kills. *Crawle* will be bringing *Kongo* to the States, and it's scheduled to be ready at launch.



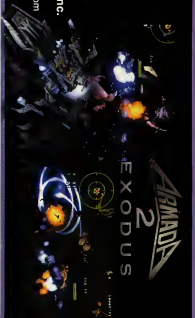
## THE NEXT GENERATION OF SLY

→ Before you could say, "Let's hope it's a better game than *Climhanger*," the word went out that the next *Stallone* film, *Driven* — based on the life of drivers who compete in the CART open-wheel racing series — is set to become a game for PlayStation 2 and Game Boy Advance. The games are being developed and published by Bam! Entertainment, and the company promises 5,000-polygon car models and a framerate of 60fps for the PS2 version. Interestingly, the director of the film, Benny Harte, also directed *Stallone* in *Climhanger* (good news or bad? We'll let you decide). Buckle up — the games are due out this fall.



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■ **HARD SHELL OR SOFT — JUST LIKE TACOS**

## Packing it in

Afraid to take your PS2 on a road trip? Here are two ways to do it safely

### Pelican Hard-shell Carrying Case

MSRP: \$29.99

→ Pelican's not-so-creatively named case gives us a nice hard outer shell — though we wouldn't stand on it with our PS2 inside — but sacrifices many of the Division-1 unit's ease-of-use features (see right). The PS2 fits into a foam-lined interior with reassuring snugness. The liner also features a general storage area that held our cords and memory cards, while two custom-curved areas are specifically shaped to hold a Dual Shock 2 controller. In fact, while the Dual Shocks 2s are stored very safely, no other controllers could fit the space, including Pelican's own pads — go figure. The case also doesn't carry games or manuals. Still, we truly felt our PS2 was safe inside, which helped us breathe a lot easier



Rating: ★★★★★

■ Pelican's case is safe, but no-nonsense to the point of fault



■ Division-1's feature-packed Play-Pak will soon be available in additional colors

### Division-1 Play-Pak

MSRP: \$39.99

→ First Impressions are guaranteed to underestimate how useful and well thought-out this case is. Velcro straps hold the PS2 firmly in place, and felt-lined areas on the sides keep two controllers and all required cables separate and safe. Four memory cards and 40 game discs can be safely stored in the lid, with instruction booklets and personal items tucked away in a large external pouch. Versatile straps enable the pack to be worn like a backpack or slung over a shoulder, and zippered flaps in front and back enable you to hook up and use your PS2 without even taking it out of the pack. Two things we didn't love about this unit: First, it requires that you take your games out of their individual cases for transport; and second, it features luggage-style soft sides, which would hardly protect your PS2 from that gorilla in the old Samsonite commercials.

Rating: ★★★★★

■ **BEAT YOUR OPPONENTS WITH A STICK**

## PlayStation 2 ShadowBlade Arcade Stick

Heavy metal rules

Manufacturer: InterAct

MSRP: \$56.99

→ Despite the perpetual redesign and refinement of the console gamepad, there's a very good reason you never see an arcade cabinet with a Dual Shock 2 plugged into it. For many games, you simply can't beat a good, old-fashioned arcade stick. And this black beauty may be the best PS2 arcade stick out there.

The first thing that sets the ShadowBlade apart is its rugged construction. The shell is wide and metal, not plastic, which makes the unit both durable, and nice and heavy. As a result, the unit is

stable. You won't be inadvertently throwing this stick around during a heated Street Fighter match. It stays put, and it can take a beating.

There are eight buttons on the ShadowBlade's face, corresponding to the Dual Shock 2's four face buttons and four shoulder buttons. Each is analog and can be reprogrammed with complex macros. The stick itself has adequate resistance and

■ If you play fighting games or shooters, you're going to want an arcade stick. And you'll probably want this one

nice movement, and is topped by an unnecessary but unobtrusive auto-fire button. Aside from PS2's lamentable lack of games that would actually benefit from the ShadowBlade, our only complaints are the lack of rumble support and the thin plastic sleeve around the joystick, which is both flimsy and a tiny bit loose.

Rating: ★★★★★



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■ IN MEMORIAM

## Isao Okawa Remembered

### Sega's philanthropic president dies of heart failure at age 74

→ Self-made billionaire, wealthiest man in Japan, founder of CSK, and long-term savior of Sega, Isao Okawa died of heart failure in a Tokyo hospital on March 16. At the time of his passing, Okawa was chairman and president of Sega. Just weeks before his death, Okawa had made international news when he announced Sega would discontinue the embattled Dreamcast. But making headline-grabbing tough decisions was nothing new for Okawa, a man who parlayed a background in

engineering and a sense for technological trends into a multibillion-dollar empire.

Okawa's involvement with Sega began in the early eighties, when Paramount Pictures offered to sell the company back to David Rosen, one of Sega's founders. To make the purchase, Rosen put together a coalition that included Hideo Nakayama, who became CEO of the company, and Okawa.

"When Mr. Okawa heard about Sega," says Rosen, "he was very interested and became the

leading figure in the buyback."

Because Okawa was very busy growing his information systems company CSK, he took a hands-off approach to running Sega and gave Nakayama free reign. (Today the CSK Group includes 90 information and entertainment companies.) But in the mid-nineties Okawa became more involved with running Sega. According to Rosen, Okawa wanted Sega to leave the hardware business rather than launch Saturn. When Saturn failed, Okawa placed former Honda executive Shoichiro Irimajiri at the helm of Sega and allowed the company to launch Dreamcast. In the two years that followed, Sega lost millions of dollars every quarter because of poor Dreamcast sales and the sluggish arcade business. When Sega's stock dipped dangerously low and investors threatened to pull out, Okawa advanced the company \$500 million dollars from his own personal fortune.

Last May, Okawa personally replaced Shoichiro Irimajiri as president. Under his new leadership, Sega trimmed its arcade operations down considerably, even closing a few of its flagship Jyojyois Entertainment Centers. Earlier this year, Okawa made one more cutback — giving the order to discontinue Dreamcast and become a software-only company. To help with the transition, he gave back his shares of the company, which were valued

at approximately \$750 million. "It was an incredible gift," says Sega of America President and COO Peter Moore.

Okawa's generosity didn't begin or end with Sega. In 1986, he started the Okawa Foundation, which made considerable grants to the development of information and communications technology. In 1998, he made a private contribution of approximately \$30 million to establish the Okawa Center for Future Children in the media laboratory of MIT. Upon learning of Okawa's death, CSK President Mashiro Aozono wrote, "Okawa left to all of us in the CSK Group his personal management philosophy that he created himself — 'It's the people that count.'"

"I am very saddened to learn of the passing of my friend and business associate, Mr. Isao Okawa," David Rosen said in a letter of condolence to the Okawa family. "He was a man of great vision, who dedicated his energy and his many abilities to whatever task he undertook. He always maintained a very strong sense of responsibility. Mr. Okawa was always ready to listen and explore new ideas. He was an inspiration to the younger staff as well as management of Sega. He was a man with charisma, who loved music and good conversation." — Steven Kent

■ One of Isao Okawa's final achievements was to put Sega on its current path as a software-based game company



### MORE CONFESSIONS OF THE HARDCORE

It was a week before Christmas, and I had asked for Mike Tyson's Punch Out! At the time, the only game I had for my NES was baseball, and I had maxed out all resources in that game and could hit homers out of the stadium with ease. Being a non-religious family, my family would wrap presents and put them under the tree weeks before Christmas morning. With about a week before Christmas, I noticed a small box with my name on it.

I had only asked for Punch Out, and I was hoping this box was it. That Monday after school, I took the

package to my room and slowly stripped back the tape until I could finally see Iron Mike. I knew what had to be done. I took the cartridge out and swapped it with baseball. Sad to admit, I lost to Glass Joe the first time I played it — not sure if it was because I was excited or what. But when it was all over, I had beaten the game by Christmas Eve. I took back baseball, wrapped up Punch Out again, and acted surprised as a mother Christmas morning. When I played it for the first time in front of the family I quickly got all the way to the second match

against Flaton Honda, until I realized that I should be sucking at it — so I let Honda take me down.

**Matthew Aitken**  
St. Louis, Missouri

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■ EAT, WEB-SURF, HARVEST ENDURIUM CRYSTALS...

## Xulu Entertainment's Earthstation

Reason to leave the house: Xulu's motion-based games are poised to redefine the bleeding edge of location-based entertainment

➔ Explaining the breadth of Xulu (pronounced ZOO-loo)

Entertainment's ambitious project is difficult, and the company's cofounder and Creative Director Nand Magoun helps little when she explains: "In essence, it's just

another place, except it happens to be an intergalactic resort and newly discovered solar system where all kinds of new things are possible."

Upon entering Xulu's Earthstation, patrons will find themselves, with the help of some giant

display panels, transported to a luxury starship. The ship orbits Eidolon, an Earth-like planet in a distant solar system. Visitors will have access to a vast range of activities: dining, drinking, browsing the Internet, or exploring Eidolon's virtual cities, in which visitors can shop, gamble, and even patronize an outsource red-light district.

But what separates Xulu's visionary world from more traditional,

stagnant, arcade-machine-heavy venues are its games. Played in high-end, two-person motion simulators, the games offer physics simulation that is, quite simply, remarkable. We started by flying a glider and harvesting Endurium Crystals in scenic Lara Canyon, and it truly felt like we were floating on the wind. A few minutes later, we were back in the same pods playing Dominion, a vehicular version of CTF in which one player drives, and the other shoots. The pods shuddered when a shell detonated nearby and pitched accordingly when players rammed each other. Frankly, we were blown away during our brief visit, and Xulu tells us there are more games planned before launch. We'll keep you posted — the first location is scheduled for the San Francisco Bay Area in 2002. — Eric Brotcher



■ Each game is built around a fantastically realistic physics engine, crucial to integrating the motion stimulation



■ Xulu hopes to grant PC and, eventually, online console gamers access to its universe

■ HELLO KITTY

## A new videogame for your cat?

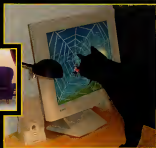
Cyberpounce offers interactive entertainment for your furry friends

➔ Sometimes you just want to smack your monitor or toss your speakers right off the desk. Now there's a game that lets you do it — if you're a cat, that is.

A former producer for Sega and EA, Cyberpounce creator Matt Wolf got the idea for the game when he was working on a computer and his cat jumped on his lap. "He started chasing [the cursor], and it cracked me up," he says. Wolf took that inspiration, consulted with a cat behavior expert to find out more about feline senses and predatory instincts, then gathered the resources to produce the game. Cyberpounce features cartoonish 2D animations and sounds that are designed specifically to appeal to a cat's

sight and hearing. In the game, a brightly colored object — say, a mouse or a spider — crawls along the screen, making sounds that catch the critter's attention.

So does it really work? It depends on the cat. "Cats have tastes too," notes Wolf, so not every one will like it (just as not every gamer will love EverQuest). But this is no reason to dismiss Cyberpounce as a viable form of feline entertainment. According to Dr. Nicholas Dodman, of Tufts University's School of Veterinary Medicine, cats living in human households need stimulation. "If you keep cats indoors, it is your duty as an owner to make sure the environment is suitably enriched to make it cat-friendly,"



■ Does Cyberpounce work? In our not-so-scientific field study, we found one or two cats (like Figo and above) who showed an interest in the game

Dodman says. "If you're going to go out for a couple of hours, periodically you could post [the game] and they might have some fun."

Will pet entertainment take the game industry by storm? Wolf believes in the potential for games to move beyond a human audience — he's already working on a sequel. In the meantime, the original can be ordered from [www.cyberpounce.com](http://www.cyberpounce.com) at the bargain price of \$14.95 — Jennifer Tsou



# ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND



PlayStation 2

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# Alphas

**Next Generation** prowls through the night, stalking those who seek to keep the newest games secret

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■ PLAYSTATION 2

# BATMAN: VENGEANCE

■ Publisher **Ubi Soft** ■ Developer **Ubi Soft** ■ Release Date **September** ■ Origin **Canada**

Can the Dark Knight finally end Gotham City's plague of bad games?

 The legend of the Dark Knight began in 1939 with DC Comics' Detective Comics #27, and Batman's following has since grown like Jack's fabled bean sprout. It's provided the spark for TV shows (both live-action and animated), movies, waves of merchandise, and a slew of videogames fit for flushing. Though there have been some competent Batman titles, others such as *Batman Forever*, *Batman & Robin*, and

*Batman Beyond: The Return of the Joker* have cast a plexelated pall on DC's popular hero.

Expect the haze to lift in short order. A select band of crusaders operating out of developer Ubi Soft's Montreal office is creating a stunning Batman game for PlayStation 2. *Batman: Vengeance* is a single-player, third-person adventure that utilizes the character designs from *Batman: The Animated Series*. Combining

inspired and cartoonish 3D graphics, a neat plot steeped in intrigue, and some decidedly innovative gameplay facets, this game may well elevate the Dark Knight to a more desirable videogame throne.

The game begins with Batman, clad in the original black-bat-with-no-yellow-circle-encasing-it costume given to him by creator Bob Kane, cradling a shrieking young woman in



■ The game will lead Batman to explore areas of Gotham City unknown even to him



■ There will be over 30 cut scenes to help drive a suitably dark and compelling story



his arms, seeking egress while a time bomb ticks down nearby. Later, players will pilot the Bat Plane through the cramped streets of Gotham City while attempting to gun down Mr. Freeze and his iceball-shooting helicopter, as well as freefalling through the night air in order to rescue the Joker, who, true to character, returns the favor with a hail of machine-gun fire and killer balloons.

The game features a default third-person view and a first-person mode in which players can simultaneously move and employ wonderful gadgets like the Bat Scope, the Batarang, and the Electric Charge Remote — a device that sticks to walls, detonating when a thug approaches.

Gameplay emphasizes stealth and strategy, but does not skimp on the part where Batman punches the no-goodniks in the face repeatedly. He can press against a wall to avoid detection and sneak up on some foes, quickly handcuffing (and effectively neutralizing) them. When the sneaky stuff fails, however, the game shifts to a battle mode that allows our hero to

**“Batman alone has over 500 distinct animations.”**

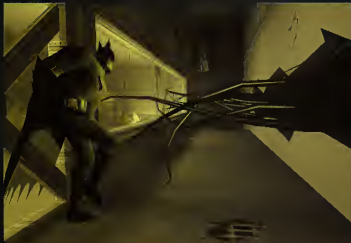
—David Schenkel, professor, *The God*

move around in a glorious 360-degree circle. Battles however, are (sadly) strictly one-on-one affairs.

“It’s a game that’s focused around story!” Ubi Soft Producer Reid Schneider says. “We wanted to tell a great story that would transcend [a medium]. It could be used for a videogame... then again, it could be

■ The player will be able to fly the Bat Plane around this fully realized cityscape





■ Besides battling the Joker and his mistress Harley Quinn, Batman will find himself facing off against the forces of Mr. Freeze and Poison Ivy



■ The first-person view (above) and our hero with the Batmobile, which appears to have been animated in a similar, sleek style (below)



used for a feature film or an episode of the TV series." To help with the game's plotting, Schneider enlisted scriptwriter J.T. Petty and worked directly with Warner Bros. and DC Comics to ensure the game's tale was suitably titanic. Schneider disclosed few details, but he did reveal that the plot involves the "death" of the Joker, and a grand conspiracy by which the hero will find himself manipulated.

In his quest to save Gotham City from disaster, Batman will encounter the Joker and his insane mistress Harley Quinn, the seductive female eco-terrorist, Poison Ivy, and the tortured soul, Mr. Freeze. Each villain holds sway over a specialized series of goons. Ivy's verdant minions, for example, possess arms that can stretch out like tendrils. Though Robin the Boy Wonder will not appear, Batgirl will play an important part in the proceedings, as will Batman's alter ego, millionaire Bruce Wayne. Voice actors from *Batman: The Animated Series* (including Star Wars' Mark Hamill) will be employed throughout.

"What's really been important to us is innovation and emotional involvement," Schneider says. "We wanted gameplay that the player had never seen before." To this end, Schneider's team has cobbled up a dark and gritty 3D Gotham City to beguile the eyes, and they've also staged epic, PS2-enabled scenes that could not have been given visual justice elsewhere. These include climactic fights on the Gotham City Bridge and over the bubbling vats at Gotham Chemical.

Running off a PC, and still lacking

Dual Shock vibration feedback, fine-tuned particle effects, explosions, and finalized lighting, this largely (80%) complete animated *Batman* still proved intriguing. Special blending techniques lend a fluidity to each and every one of the barrel-chested, lantern-jawed Batman's movements. "Batman alone has over 500 distinct animations," Schneider says. "We went into almost painstaking detail to make sure that *Batman* moves in the right way."

**Batman can string together simple** kick-and-punch combos, so game fans of all skill levels can play. But this simplicity belies considerable depth; taps on the analog stick can produce countless different punches and kicks, and Batman's weaponry can also be

used for exotic purposes — he can hurt smoke bombs to first disorient his foe, then slide around his flank, or vault right over him. There are even special moves, such as the "Hammer of Justice," where Batman grabs his nemesis at the shoulders and hurls him to the ground.

Call it a cartoon brought a life. Nine minutes' worth of gorgeous cinematics and 30 or so in-game cut scenes help to string the game's linear plot along. Add to this an original score that manages both to breathlessly impress with its blend of techno and classical, and to prick at the nerves with insipid piano bar tinklings. "Hope is death," hisses a seemingly doomed Mr. Freeze during the game, but his cold logic will likely melt in the face of Udi Soft's stary Knight. — Greg Orlando

■ Batman unleashes a variety of lavishly animated, martial-arts-inspired fighting moves



#### BAT WISDOM

While much ado has been made of the vocal stylings of Adam West, who played Batman in the first TV series — the one with all the "Burr!"s and "Ka-Pow!"s — too little attention is paid to the words themselves. Here are four notable things overheard in Gotham City:

"Criminals are a cowardly and superstitious lot."  
— Bruce Wayne

"Hope is death."  
— Mr. Freeze

"Caution, cape does not enable user to fly."  
— Warning on children's Batman costume

"And where is the Batman! He's at home, washing his tights."  
— The Joker

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PlayStation 2



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■ Shadow Man's appearance is more menacing than before, though he still looks like he could give ugly lessons to Raskel



■ PLAYSTATION 2

# SHADOW MAN: 2 SECOND COMING

■ Publisher: **Acclaim** ■ Developer: **Acclaim** ■ Release Date: **August** ■ Origin: **England**

Can better graphics and deeper AI move this title out of the shadows and into the light? The Shadow (Man) knows...

**E** Acclaim's *Shadow Man*, which was based upon a Garth Ennis comic of the same name, was one of the most promising comic-based games of the past few years. Unfortunately, the gameplay narrowly missed the mark. But despite this, the game's setting — a world of voodoo, zombies, and the land of the dead — remains among the most compelling we've ever encountered, so we're happy to learn that Acclaim is planning on sending players *Deadside* once again, this time to battle an enemy over 2000 years old.

For those unfamiliar with the game's mythology, *Shadow Man* is actually Mike LeRo, a reluctant hitman bound into servitude by a 400-year-old voodoo priestess named Mama Nettie. As the undead, voodoo-powered *Shadow Man*, Mike wields various superhuman powers, including the ability to travel between the world as we know it and a bleak, hellish land of the dead, appropriately dubbed "Deadside."

Like the first *Shadow Man* title, this new game is essentially a third-person action adventure with strong horror

leanings, similar to a less linear, cajun-flavored *Soul Reaver*, or *Fear Effect* with an acid-tinged *Mardi Gras* hangover. Gameplay, however, has been tweaked and deepened for the sequel. The transformation from Mike into *Shadow Man* and back again, which was dictated by location in the first game, is now triggered by an in-game day/night cycle. The two forms will also have more widely differing capabilities, though the ability to control both hands independently — hefting a pistol in one hand and gripping a ledge with the other, for example — will remain



# → Alphas



■ There are seven major locations in the game, running the gamut from rough neighborhoods to ancient temples



constant. The hand-to-hand combat system has also been completely overhauled, perhaps to incorporate new techniques that will be useful during the game's newly added stealth segments — practically a required game element in these Metal Gear Solid-influenced days.

**To challenge this new, more versatile** Shadow Man, Acclaim has imbued enemies with enhanced, "rule-based" AI,

which enables multiple enemies to cooperate against you. "An enemy may stand off in a sniping position," offers Acclaim Producer Nick Bagley, "while his heavier-armored team attacks directly." Or an enemy could choose to retreat, calling for reinforcements and renewing the attack when they arrive. This new system also grants enemy units greater awareness of their surroundings, enabling them to identify better ambush points or

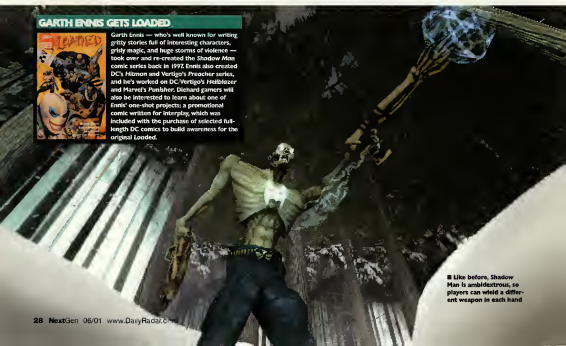
locations from which to snipe.

The action should look good too, thanks to the greater horsepower of PS2 and a built-from-scratch game engine that Bagley claims is running 6 million textured, 16 polygons per second, to rise to 10 to 12 million polygons per second after optimization. Bagley's team has worked hard to make sure the game boasts a thorough complement of special effects, including full-screen motion blur, reflection

## GARTH ENNIS GETS LOADED



Garth Ennis — who's well known for writing gritty stories full of interesting characters, gritty magic, and huge storms of violence — took over and re-created the Shadow Man comic series back in 1997. Ennis also created DC's *Hitman* and *Vortigo's Preacher* series, and he's worked on DC's *Vortigo's Hellblazer* and *Marvel's Punisher*. Diehard gamers will also be interested to learn about one of Ennis' one-shot projects: a promotional comic written for interplay, which was included with the purchase of selected full-length DC comics to build awareness for the original *Loaded*.



■ Like before, Shadow Man is ambidextrous, so players can wield a different weapon in each hand



■ The game will feature a full weather system. The player can even gain the power to create snowstorms.

mapping, enhanced particle effects, and a dynamic weather system. In fact, the weather can have serious impact on gameplay. Explains Bagley: "In the Russia level, invoking a snow spell affects the AI visibility, confusing the enemies. It also wipes out the players' footprints, making it harder for them to track the player."

**While the original *Shadow Man*** game's setting and story borrowed generously from the comic book, this new chapter sets off on its own, introducing a new enemy, the Grigori, spawned

directly from the minds of the dev team. Described by Bagley as "infinitely more evil" than the serial killers of the first game, the Grigori are actual demons who've been masquerading as humans for the past 2000 years. They also want to release their leader, Asmodeus, from the Pit, setting him free to wreak havoc on Earth. Bagley let slip that his team members have allowed themselves to run wild with the Grigori designs, creating boss characters that are "hideous abominations that stalk the player through their lairs, armed with

Nephilim powers and weapons."

Despite various minor failings — particularly in the PlayStation version, which taxed the hardware to the limit — the first *Shadow Man* sold over a million units across three formats (PC, N64, PS2). The sequel looks to hew closely to the original formula, with changes being only for the better: more sophisticated AI, greater variety in required tasks and player abilities, and a move to lushly decrepit, PS2-enabled graphics. If these adjustments prove to be enough to move gameplay up to the same inspired level as the setting and story, we'll be unable to resist plunging once again into the chilling, magical worlds of *Shadow Man*.

— Eric Bratcher



■ The Grigori can appear human, but their true forms are literally demonic.



■ Rivers and pools get deeper when it rains and can be used to gain access to previously unreachable areas.



90 pts

■ PLAYSTATION 2

# STRETCH PANIC

■ Publisher: Conspiracy Entertainment ■ Developer: Treasure ■ Release Date: Q4 ■ Origin: Japan

Treasure makes its first PS2 appearance a wild one

→ Japanese developer Treasure has never played by the same rules as the rest of the game industry, and nowhere is this better exemplified than in its latest project, the abstract and downright bizarre 3D action game *Stretch Panic*. While the rest of the world pushes to create more and more

detailed worlds, deeper experiences, and photorealistic graphics, Treasure is once again doing what it does best — creating an extremely playable game with wonderfully unique game mechanics. The big difference this time is that Treasure has foregone its incredibly strong 2D heritage to try its hand at 3D. The results

are, as you might expect, strange yet delightful, and the gameplay already demonstrates some of the innovative hooks that have made Treasure the hardcore gamer's developer of choice.

*Stretch Panic* focuses on Linda, a young girl whose sisters have all been possessed by the so-called Demons of Superficial Beauty. Linda was actually a target herself, yet the demon bungled its attempt and got stuck in Linda's scarf, which she can now control. The relationship between Linda and her possessed scarf form the backbone of game. The left stick moves Linda around the world, the right controls her scarf, and the R1 button grabs on to whatever it is near. If you want to attack something, simply grab hold of it, pull back, and then let go, causing the object's skin to snap back. Or if you're feeling especially aggressive, you can grab on to a character and charge up your power — done by spinning the right stick — and then fly in for a head-butt of sorts. Because Linda has no jump, she must grab hold of a piece of the environment and pull herself up ledges



■ Linda (in the red cap) uses her black scarf to grab onto anything in the game and stretch it around. If you do this to a creature you can cause damage; if you do it to a ledge or cliff, you can hoist yourself up

80 pts

Each of the demons has its own unique realm. This level takes place on the outside of a small planetoid, complete with light and dark sides



Linda's sisters have all been possessed and have taken on some seriously bizarre forms



or over chasms. As with most Treasure titles, the game mechanic feels very different than anything that's come before, but it's already tuned to the point where it's easy to pick up and use.

**Stretch Panic's overall structure** is also a bit out of the ordinary. Most of the game will revolve around Linda as she fights the 12 bosses that were once her sisters. Each boss has her own unique look, level, and mode of attack. And while it will obviously take good reflexes — a Treasure trademark — to beat each boss, you'll also need smarts, as they all

have their own weaknesses as well. One boss, for example, can't be hit unless she's lured into the water, which causes her to solidify into mud. Another, who very much resembles Mrs. Potato Head, can't be hurt unless you knock all of her facial features off with a good head-butt.

Breaking up the numerous boss battles are the "Ex" levels, which are fairly close to what you might find in a traditional 3D platformer. Players fight smaller creatures and jump between ledges, earning the necessary points required to open up the boss levels. Unfortunately, these stages are at the

earliest stage of development, so they may look great, but they aren't populated with enemies yet.

We have little doubt that Stretch Panic will be yet another shining example of Treasure's dedication to unique and highly playable gameplay ideas. It remains to be seen, however, whether the U.S. market will be able to appreciate these things in light of the game's warped aesthetic. Honestly, we doubt that this will be a breakthrough hit, but for those who dare test its waters, Stretch Panic will likely be worth their time.

— Blake Fischer

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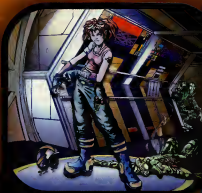
It's no secret that those fans who seek out Treasure games are among the most hardcore and dedicated anywhere. Unfortunately, this can lead to problems when the company's games aren't released in the U.S. One of Treasure's most sought-after games, Resident Silvergun, is a prime example. Copies have been known to fetch upwards of \$150 on eBay, and there are more people looking for the elusive title every day, even though it's on the now-defunct Saturn. Another title, Alien Soldier for Mega Drive, is insanely rare has gone for over \$300 in its native Japan. So serious fans have formed a secret: Buy every Treasure game the day it comes out, or you'll have to pay through the nose for it in a couple of years.



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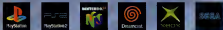


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■ Many of Midway's classic *Spy Hunter* elements have made the transition to 3D. Nothing's final, but this weapons truck looks promising.

■ PLAYSTATION 2

# SPY HUNTER

■ Publisher: Midway Home Entertainment ■ Developer: Paradigm ■ Release Date: September ■ Origin: US

Midway brings another beloved classic into the modern day. Is it sacrilege, or the best thing since the ejection seat?

➔ One of the great ironies in modern gaming is that, despite our gigahertz processors and GeForce3-enabled consoles, modernized versions of classic arcade games are usually horrible. Thus, when we first heard that Midway was planning on revisiting *Spy Hunter*, one of the all-time greats, we admit we winced instead of smiling. But then we remembered that Midway was the company whose 1998 arcade release *Gauntlet Legends* effectively reinvented Atari's classic *Gauntlet*, originally released in 1985. Then we went down to Midway and playtested this new *Spy Hunter* for ourselves. Now, with the "Peter Gunn" theme echoing in our heads and adrenaline rushing through our veins, we can honestly say this may not have been such a bad idea after all.

"The idea was to take the coolest aspects of the original — the car, the


enemies, the transitions from land to water and the weapons van — and build on those," explains Midway Producer Michael Gottlieb. Indeed, the first thing we noticed when we actually played the game is that, though it's obvious that much has changed, a great deal has remained refreshingly the same. Midway has retained that breakneck, running-the-gauntlet (no pun intended) sensation that made the original *Spy Hunter* so addictive. Naturally, the player has cool wheels: the G655 Interceptor, a sleek, white, metallic beast Gottlieb describes as "a combat-ready amphibious escape vehicle that looks kick-ass with functions to match." And just as before, you must race against time down a narrow, branching route rife with villainous dark blue antagonists with names like *Switchblade*, *Mad Bomber*, and *The Enforcer* — all of whom would prefer that your Interceptor

become a twisted pile of smoking shrapnel on the side of the road. Luckily, you're not alone. A certain bright red 18-wheeler with a tendency to fill your car



■ Although it sounds conceptually similar, this game is far from EA's *007 Racing*. It retains the original *Spy Hunter*'s narrow path, speed, and arcade pacing.

# → Alphas



■ After you've taken a certain amount of damage, the GAGS will change into a smaller vehicle called a Secondary Extraction Vehicle, or SEV (above middle). Looks like a motorcycle to us

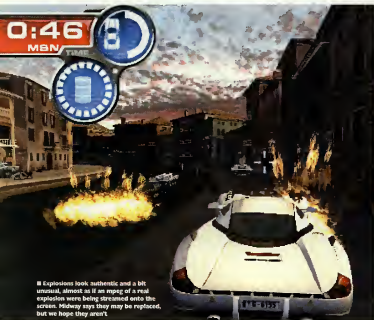
with oil slicks, smoke screens, and artillery has also made a triumphant return.

**Nobody will mistake this version for the original.** Virtually every aspect of the game has been amped up, enhanced, or otherwise reworked for the game's move into the 21st century. The first, most obvious change is the 3D engine, which we're told will be locked at 60fps when

the game finally ships. Also, as the original game was fundamentally bred to eat quarters, a certain deepening of the gameplay was necessary. This was done by incorporating a traditional spy-caper storyline — a huge genetics company (called NOSTRA) is actually a globally entrenched crime syndicate led by a delusional evil genius attempting to take over the world — and expanding the player's

mission beyond "drive and survive."

"We decided that single-player car combat is fun, but not enough," offers Gottlieb, "so we made the missions objective-based." This means that while the player is always racing to arrive at the rendezvous point on time and in one piece, you are now faced with various additional tasks. A mission in Key West will find you stealing NOSTRA's plans for a new



■ Explosions look authentic and a bit unusual, almost as if an mpg of a real explosion were being streamed onto the screen. Midway says they may be replaced, but we hope they aren't.



■ The game's 14 levels take place in eight locations, ranging from Venice to Key West







■ All the weapons from the first game have returned, joined by some new ones like guided missiles, a tracking device, and an EMP.

Interceptor-class vehicle, then destroying the parts convoy while a Panama mission has you using SATCOM stations to relay the locations of drug shipments. There is a total of 65 objectives over the game's 14 levels, but many are secondary and need not be completed to progress through the game. Regardless of the mission variety, the player is never required to move from behind the wheel of the Interceptor. In fact, you may not even have to slow down. "The main design goal of the game is high-speed, action-packed driving so we catered everything around those elements," says Gottlieb.

Despite our excitement over the return of a classic franchise and all of Midway's planned enhancements, we still have some nagging reservations about this

new Spy Hunter. Every level we saw featured countless stationary, roadside enemies that could only be destroyed if we slowed to a crawl or memorized their placement — a situation we found seriously counteractive to the tense, frenetic, anything-can-happen atmosphere the rest of the game tries to create. Also, while the original Interceptor was capable of bumping fenders with virtually anyone, this new model is easily damaged and must therefore take great care not to collide with other vehicles. These factors also result in a heavily increased reliance on projectile weapons, and though it's fun to blast Enforcer into shrapnel with a missile, we miss running him right off the road. Finally, given the fragility of the car and the constant roadside ambushes, the lack of any form of radar is somewhat befuddling.

Still, Midway has assured us that all these things could change for the better by the time the game is released. If they do, even COJ' himself will be begging to take a certain familiar white, one-of-a-kind hot rod for a spin. — Eric Brecher

#### YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE... OR MAYBE THREE TIMES

Believe it or not, this new Spy Hunter is actually the third game in the series, not the second. As a matter of fact, it isn't even the first Spy Hunter game to adopt a 3D behind-the-car camera perspective. In truth, there was indeed a Spy Hunter II arcade game, published by Midway in 1987. It featured a pseudo-3D isometric viewpoint, added many new antagonists (who often inexplicably resembled punk rock bikers), and was widely regarded, simply, as a terrible game. On the bright side, it also introduced a radar system — one of the features we feel is missing from the new game.



■ The SEV — the motorcycle shown here — accelerates more quickly and turns more sharply than the car. It also forces enemies to aim at a smaller target.



■ Each level incorporates several objectives. In this one, you must destroy mobile missile launchers, attach tracking devices to cargo ships, and use SATCOM units to transmit secret code.

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■ Ubi Soft's supervision should ensure that *Evil Twin*'s gameplay is polished and as well balanced as *Rayman 2*.

■ PLAYSTATION 2, DREAMCAST, PC

# EVIL TWIN — CYPRIEN'S CHRONICLES

■ Publisher: Ubi Soft ■ Developer: In Utero ■ Release Date: September ■ Country: France

Didn't think *Rayman 2 Revolution* was all that revolutionary?

➔ With the *Tomb Raider* clones dying out, the latest "most copied" genre may just be games that focus on the less innocent parts of a child's mind. American McGee put a twisted spin on *Alice*, while Argonaut is hard at work on *Molice*, "a dark and comic fiery tale" (NG 04/01). Finally, here's Ubi Soft with *Evil Twin* — Cyprien's Chronicles.

The game itself is a 3D platformer, but

developer In Utero has put substantial effort into making Cyprien himself far more than just a younger *Mano* — a goal reflected in the game's darker-than-average plot. One typically morbid day, orphan Cyprien escapes his own birthday party, which, sadly enough, happens to coincide with the anniversary of his parents' death. He locks himself in his bedroom and is suddenly transported to

an evil, perverted world of nightmares where his orphan friends have been turned into manic monsters.

"The basic concept," explains In Utero President Xavier Gonot, "was to bring classic action-adventure elements into an unusually mature scenario and wrap it all in a fantastical graphical style." The game certainly does impress with very creative character designs and atmospheric environments. In Utero Art Director Stephan Bachelet seized inspiration from movies



■ Hidden power-ups will turn Cyprien's slingshot from a primitive affair into a powerful tool

■ In *Utero Art*, Director Stephan Ratchelt and his team of artists are working hard to distinguish *Evil Twin* in terms of graphics and atmosphere.



■ The game's realtime cut scenes show off the wacky characters. We can't help but notice that Cyprien (above) slightly resembles Chucky.



such as *City of Lost Children* and *The Wizard of Oz*, as well as European, American, and Japanese comic books.

This richness in styles is also reflected in the gameplay: Cyprien can split himself into two separate beings: his regular self and a superpowered alter ego, Super Cyprien, whose electrified white hair, pulsating red eyes, and black chrome outfit is more than a little reminiscent of *Dragonball Z*. "Super Cyprien is an all-powerful and pugnacious facet of Cyprien's personality," says Gonot. "He can neither talk nor solve puzzles and is designed for pure action only, while Cyprien does both. In other words, when Cyprien talks, Super Cyprien fights!"

In *Evil Twin*'s "standard" portion you'll be required to run, jump, use objects, talk to other creatures, and shoot enemies with Cyprien's upgradeable

slingshot. But other areas require a more aggressive approach, where the alter ego can throw fireballs and lightning bolts, and perform a Super Charge to blast enemies. "One move I particularly like is when he jumps, freezes in the air in a pure *Motrix*-like fashion, and then lets go of a huge fireball," Gonot says.

"Without breaking new ground in terms of gameplay — it's widely inspired by *Mario*, *Crash*, *Zelda* and *Rayman 2*," Gonot explains, "the game is packed with innovative elements, such as the use of two alternate characters and fun skills." Gonot also described a sub-level where you control a paper warplane from a first-person perspective as an example of *Evil Twin*'s multi-faceted gameplay.

Derivative or not, this brand of spooky, gothic-nightmare atmosphere worked well in *Alice* and looks equally freaky here. There are eight different islands

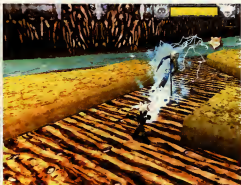
populated by three distinct breeds (Half-men, Folk People, and Flying People), screen-filling monsters, and end bosses. There's also over a gigabyte in uncompressed textures, so you should enjoy plenty of visual variety as well. Finally with around 120 cut scenes, the plot may be better than the average "find the pieces of the big, important thing" storyline typical in a platformer. *Alice* may not be coming to PS2 or Dreamcast, but her *Evil Twin* definitely is. — Jorg Tittel

#### THE TWIN GETS TRIPLED

Though we can expect superior graphics on Sony's console and high-end PCs, it may turn out that Sega's clinically dead Dreamcast system will receive the most complete *Evil Twin* experience. Upgrades, such as weapons and new costumes, will be available on a special web page, and Dreamcast's inner clock will unlock time-limited surprises at set dates. The game will ship with four VMU mini-games, including a "personalized Space Invaders" and a "crazy little puzzle game that'll keep you busy for hours," says In *Utero* President Xavier Gonot. He promises that the team should also be able to exploit PS2's unique capabilities. "We just have to find out how," he says.



■ The fact that Super Cyprien can't move objects or talk to other characters should free up lots of buttons for attack.



■ The dynamic Super Cyprien spices up the game with pure action, while Cyprien handles exploration and other, less overtly hostile forms of interaction.

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■ Players can fight with melee weapons, ranged weapons, or even large-scale siege engines



■ XBOX, PC

# ENCLAVE

■ Publisher: **Conspiracy Entertainment** ■ Developer: **Starbreeze Studios**  
 ■ Release Date: **Q1 2002 (Xbox), TBD (PC)** ■ Origin: **Sweden**

Sometimes a sword just isn't enough to get the job done right



■ Enclave really takes advantage of Xbox's 64MB of RAM. The textures in the game are extremely detailed and make the world seem almost photorealistic at times



→ With the latest wave of next-generation systems just around the corner, it's becoming harder and harder to pigeonhole games into specific genres. Take Starbreeze Studio's *Enclave*, for example. Part third-person shooter, part RPG, and part Counter-Strike-style multiplayer warfare, the game deftly blurs the typical genre boundaries. Still, the team knows that creating a great game isn't just about rehashing the past, it's about melding a fresh new gameplay vision with the engine technology and gaming platform that will make it shine. With *Enclave*'s clever mix of distinct character classes, hack-and-slash action, and wicked new multiplayer modes, the game is

already well on its way.

The storyline within *Enclave* plays a part in both the single-player campaign



■ The single-player game will also have team-based aspects. You might find yourself leading a small cadre of warriors against a fortress or even setting up a defensive perimeter around a vulnerable ally.



■ Players will continuously have to upgrade their armor, as it will degrade if it takes too much of a beating on the battlefield.



and the multiplayer missions. In the game's world, two opposing factions — predictably, the warriors of light and darkness — are preparing to do battle once more, eons after their world was torn in half and a giant chasm divided the sides. Players begin by choosing either the dark or light side in the coming great war, and that choice will affect their path through the game's 15 to 20 missions. The next choice is picking one of five unique character classes — both sides have roughly equivalent classes — each with its own skills, strengths, and weaknesses. Along the way players can use the gold they earn to improve skills as well as buy new weapons and armor.

Enclave is really a mix of several different game styles, blending third-person perspective with the speed of Quake 3 and the variety and depth of Team Fortress into a game that almost feels

**“There’s something very satisfying about setting off a catapult and watching it bring down the tower of a cathedral on someone’s head.”**

—Jon Anderson, programming/designer, Starbreeze Studios

familiar when you first pick it up. As in Team Fortress, the genius of the game lies in its fine-tuned balance. Every character has its place and can approach problems from a unique perspective. “There should be a way to utilize each class’ specific skillset to accomplish each mission,” explains Conspiracy Executive Producer Dan Jevons. “Say there’s an infiltration level, and you pick the assassin character. Well, she’ll have to sneak in without being seen and poison someone’s food. Another character, like an ogre, might just take on the enemy forces head-on. Or maybe the gnome engineer would have to sneak to a differ-

ent part of the map and align a catapult to take out the building the target’s in.”

The overall single-player mission structure is still very much a work in progress, but the team is dedicated to keeping the levels fresh and exciting. Some may have you fighting solo, while in others, you might command or defend NPCs. Scripted scenes, like those in Half-Life, will help in telling the story during the gameplay in each mission.

**One of Enclave’s biggest draws** is that it adds large-scale siege weapons to the action-adventure formula. “Players like to break stuff, and we want to give them



■ Split-screen multiplayer is already up and running on early Xbox hardware. It is unknown at this point whether the team will be able to incorporate online play



# → Alphas



■ Any character class can use any weapon, with class-specific proficiencies dictating how effective characters are with each weapon.

the ability to do that on an unprecedented scale," admits Starbreeze Programmer and Designer Jens Andersson. "There's something very satisfying about setting off a catapult and watching it bring down the tower of a cathedral on someone's head." It's the sort of complex simulation that could bring the system to a crawl, but the team has discovered a clever way of pre-simulating all the possible environmental break points, then scripting the collapsing buildings so they look natural. "If you're standing in the way of a collapsing building, the rubble will still push you back and hurt you," explains Starbreeze Lead Programmer Magnus Högdahl. "The only thing you can't do is affect its motion, which would be unrealistic anyway."

Huge game levels further enhance the action, and the team is striving to make them as believable as possible. If you see a door on a building, for example, you can go inside of it, head up the stairs, smash the windows on the second floor with a solid hit, and use the position to snipe



■ The weapons in *Endorse* are pseudo-realistic. While there are plenty of swords and the like, you'll also find bows that can fire arrows at insanely high speeds.

with your crossbow or spells. Even better, some characters may be able to jump out the window and then scamper across neighboring rooftops in search of the ideal hiding spot. Consistency will be key here, and Andersson admits that he and the other designers are doing their best to ensure that players are never confused by what they can and can't do. "If the designers want to have a door for decoration, they must visually show the player it can't be opened by barring the door shut with boards or something," he declares. "We don't want any part of the level to have a movie-set-style 'fake front.'"

**A lot of emphasis will obviously be placed on the single-player experience, but multiplayer also promises to be a**

■ The game will normally run at 540p/40 on Xbox, but the team is discussing native support for 16:9 aspect ratios and even high-res HDV.



■ Characters are composed of up to 10,000 polys each. Even the eyes have been modeled separately so that they can track opponents.



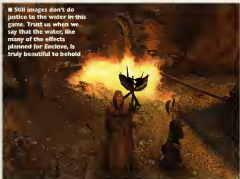
huge draw. Besides the requisite Deathmatch and Capture the Flag modes, the team is also working on a couple of unique modes that take advantage of *Endorse's* particular strengths — namely the variety in character classes and the

## DIRECT HITS

We all tend to take collision detection for granted, but the absolute precision with which *Endorse* tracks hits on your character dramatically enhances the gameplay. Body armor, for example, becomes much more important if the game can actually detect whether an incoming arrow hit the armor or that little bit of neck you had exposed. How fine is this detail? At one point in the middle of our demo, we jokingly asked the project's executive producer, Dan Jevons, if a clever Bowman could shoot the weapon out of his opponent's hands. Surprisingly, he didn't even look up from the game. "Oh yeah," he replied, as if we had just asked one of the most obvious questions in the world. "If I target your gun and shoot it with a certain type of arrow, the gun will be knocked out of your hand and pinned to the wall behind you." Now, that's pretty crazy.



■ Still images don't do justice to the water in this game. Trust us when we say that the water, like many of the effects planned for *Enclose*, is truly beautiful to behold.



siege weapons. Fortress mode will require teams to actually capture and use the siege weapons to destroy their opponent's spawn points and win the game. And naturally, the multi-class system will work particularly well for the multiplayer mode, as it gives players a tremendous amount of tactical variety. Though the design team may scale back some of the single-player levels into multiplayer ones, à la *GoldenEye*, the group is designing the majority of the multiplayer maps from the ground up to support the mode of play.

The big question is whether or not the game will be online. Early versions of

*Enclose* are already playable online (via PC), but it is still unknown whether Xbox will have a gaming network in place by the time this game ships. If it doesn't, the four-player split screen will be the only alternative, severely cutting down the scale of the multiplayer experience; the game was originally designed to support huge, 32-player battles. The creators are still hopeful that they will be able to include network support out of the box, but only time will tell if this is a real possibility. Still, keep in mind that Xbox does have a hard drive, so the possibility of a multiplayer patch shouldn't be discounted once the

network is up and running.

**With nine months to go until release**, *Enclose* already looks gorgeous. The technology is finished, with the exception of slight engine modifiers that will take advantage of Xbox's niftier graphical features. But the majority of the team is now focusing on getting the content in place and then polishing the game until it shines. And while we're still waiting to see that one Xbox game that makes the hardware a necessity, rather than a luxury, *Enclose* looks like it could be another showcase title in a growing stable of unique products. — Bloke Fischer



■ Players can hide in buildings, snipe from windows, and even climb up to rooftops if they want.



■ PLAYSTATION 2, PC

# P.O.W.: ESCAPE FROM COLDITZ CASTLE

■ Publisher **Codemasters** ■ Developer **Wide Games** ■ Release Date **December (PS2), Q1 2002 (PC)** ■ Origin **UK**

Ve haff vays uff makink you play..

→ During World War II, the jolly, cigar-toting Winston Churchill declared, "it is the duty of every captured Allied officer to attempt escape from whatever camp the enemy places them in, to disrupt the Nazi war machine whenever and however possible." At the same time Hitler pledged to "break the insolent spirit of these prisoners," and you'll get no prizes for guessing how. Simply put, there were plenty of incentives to get away.

This dramatic era, when "escapism" meant something more than daydreaming about sandy beaches or an addiction to soap operas, has inspired endless films and TV series (ever heard of *The Great Escape!* Okay, how about *Hogan's Heroes?*). Now Codemasters has enlisted the splendid old chaps at Wide Games to develop the first dedicated prisoner-of-war escape game, *P.O.W.: Escape from Colditz Castle*.

The aim of the game is, predictably, to escape from various POW camps as quickly as possible. How you do this is a little more complex. From a third-person perspective, with a first-person option when standing still, you must evade the guards, collaborate with fellow prisoners, and use any tools you can to win your freedom. Stealth and cunning are the order of the day, and there can only be one corpse — which would be yours, so you don't want that.

interesting subject matter to be sure,



■ Predictably, many operations are more safely performed under the shroud of darkness

■ Even your free time will be closely supervised by armed guards



and there are certainly some who will question whether Nazi prison camps should be considered proper gaming fodder. However, while prison life was largely horrendous and tragic, many ex-prisoners often talk about escape attempts as "a kind of game." Prisoners at the infamous Colditz Castle camp made many incredibly colorful escape attempts, including building a plane from smuggled pieces of wood. They intended to be the plane to a bathtub and drop the tub off the castle wall to get things moving. (Incidentally, they never needed to, but the plane has since been re-

created and does actually fly.)

**P.O.W. offers four camps from** which to escape: Salonika, Stalag Luft 1, Stalag Luft 3, and, of course, Colditz Castle. Small adjustments have been made to relieve the tedium of prison life. Buildings are closer together to cut down walking time, and a fast-forward option is being considered to condense less thrilling pursuits such as teaspoon tunneling. Overall, however, the emphasis of the game is on atmosphere, realism, and player creativity. A myriad of tools such as stones, crowbars, and matches

will be available, often from smugglers, and every object in the game has buoyancy and thermodynamic values — in other words, the game knows what will float or burn and what won't. This is an example of Wide's continuous effort to extend the creative potential for escapes beyond what is deliberately enabled. As Carl Jones, executive producer at Wide, says, "We've designed the levels, characters, and tools. Players design their own escape routes. We fully expect people to find routes we haven't even thought of"

The camera and controls are also



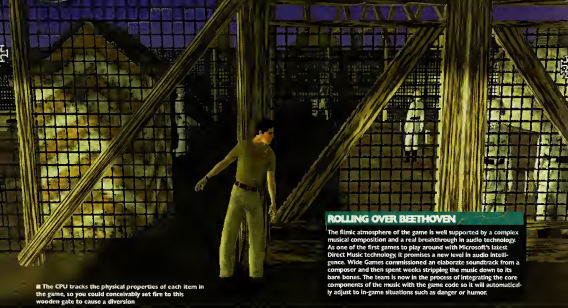
■ Buildings are closer together than they were in real life, but otherwise, the camps are re-created with meticulous authenticity



■ An automobile can make your escape much, much easier — but only if you can get to it



# → Alphas



■ The CPU tracks the physical properties of each item in the game, so you could conceivably set fire to this wooden gate to cause a diversion

based on the principles of freedom and immersion. The third-person camera can alternately freeze in place or follow the player while the context-sensitive controls quickly become intuitive and are clearly marked onscreen when necessary. Graphically, the landscapes and characters are detailed but rough, leaving Wide with considerable polishing to do; thankfully, they've got plenty of time to do it. The color palette and tone are exceedingly dark and gloomy — appropriate enough, as these settings

are not exactly circus environments.

**The fact that the game has been** stripped to its core for re-engineering at this stage is either an ominous sign of doom or a measure of the designers' determination to get the fundamentals right and create a highly playable, immersive experience without the usual side effects of the adventure genre — particularly the aimless wandering. *P.O.W.* offers guidance in the form of an "escape committee," which will offer increasingly less

■ You're no Solid Snake, so overpowering a guard is rarely appropriate. Sometimes, it's best to surrender and start again from square one



## ROLLING OVER BEETHOVEN

The filmic atmosphere of the game is well supported by a complex musical composition and a real breakthrough in audio technology. As one of the first games to play around with Microsoft's latest Direct Music technology, it promises a new level in audio intelligence. Wide Games commissioned an elaborate soundtrack from a composer and then spent weeks stripping the music down to its bare bones. The team is now in the process of integrating the core components of the music with the game code so it will automatically adjust to in-game situations such as danger or humor.

subtle clues on how to escape via the simplest of escape routes.

Of course, all of the game's incredible open-endedness would be for naught if the guards were too inept to prevent you from walking right out the front gate. Thus, Wide's Gerries have the latest perception and suspicion AI, while fellow prisoners will survive an individual and flooding intelligence — all developed in house as part of the Atlas engine. So it seems all is going according to plan in the ambitious Wide camp. If the developer succeeds in capturing the unique atmosphere of actual escape attempts, few gamers will find themselves able to get away from this game. — John Leaver

■ The game is full of dynamic shadows, which do little to lighten the bleak mood generated by your surroundings



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■ Rhama battles with all kinds of nasty critters. This pit beast is Toby Gard's self-conscious nod to the rascal from *Star Wars*.



■ Perhaps *Galleon's* most immediately noticeable feature is its fluid character animation, which makes Rhama's gymnastic tumbles a joy to watch.



■ GAMECUBE, XBOX, PLAYSTATION 2, PC

# GALLEON

■ Publisher: **Interplay** ■ Developer: **Confounding Factor** ■ Release Date: **Q4** ■ Origin: **UK**

**Can Lara Croft's creator reinvent third-person action once again?**

→ When you're responsible for creating one of the most successful (and, as it would turn out, most overused and over-typed) characters in the history of videogames, it begs the question: What does one do to follow that up? "We wanted to beat what was going on in that other game in every conceivable way," states Toby Gard, original designer of *Tomb Raider* and *Lara Croft*. Which brings us to *Galleon*, the current project of Gard's Confounding Factor, and his vision for pulling third-person action and adventure to the next level.

And in terms of ease of interaction — and pure athleticism — *Galleon's* hero, the roguish, *Sinbad*-esque adventurer

Rhama, may very well do just that. "When it comes to the control system, out and out, Toby learned from his previous mistakes," asserts Rusty Buchert,

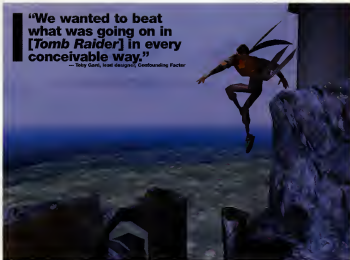
■ Rhama's companion (like the healer, Faith, pictured here) can be directed to do a wide variety of help puzzles.



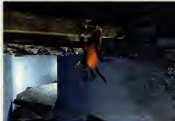


**"We wanted to beat what was going on in [Tomb Raider] in every conceivable way."**

—Toby Gard, lead designer, CoreDesign Factor



■ Rhama is able to clamber around his environment in a surprising number of ways, thanks to the contextual control system.



U.S. producer for Interplay: "The game flows," he says. "That's the only way I can put it. The game just flows in comparison to the past."

Goleon opens with Rhama making his way to the port of Akbah at the request of the town's healer, Areliano. A mysterious ship, its crew transformed into wood, has floated into the harbor and Areliano needs Rhama to investigate how such an odd occurrence could happen. Things take a bad turn when Areliano's evil assistant, Jabez, finds magic herbs on board that give him nearly unstoppable magic powers. After murdering Areliano, Jabez flies off on the wind to seek out the source of the herb, with Rhama and Areliano's daughter, Faith, close behind to stop him.

"Rhama's [control and movement] is so far beyond imagination," Gard says. "You have to learn to control the analog stick, and... well, that's at" Goleon was

designed from the ground up to be a console title, with an extremely simple control system: one stick and four buttons. The analog stick rotates the character and moves him, and there's a jump button, an attack button, a "release" button (for letting go, or breaking off an action), and the lock-on button.

This last is Goleon's biggest break with third-person action of days past. Rhama's control is almost purely contextual; his actions depend on what he's interacting with, and where. In Gard's view a character's movement is about much more than simply moving him from place to place — it's a central gameplay dynamic. When lock-on is pressed, the view switches to first-person, and objects in the environment, or even parts of the environment itself can be selected. At that point, Rhama and the third-person camera turn to face the selected object, remaining oriented

on it no matter how Rhama moves.

At its most basic level, this makes it easy to line up for a jump. Lock on to the platform you wish to reach, and there's no way a bad camera angle will fool you into misjudging the leap. However, on another level, locking on an object can signal Rhama's intent to interact with it. Select a ring of keys hanging from a jailer's belt, for example, and Rhama can then rush past him and grab the keys as he passes by. "The lock-on facility is an integral part of the way that he works," explains Gard. "It's

#### GETTING IN TOUCH

One of Goleon's most impressive features is that you can interact in some way with just about every last speck of the environment. "Most games have a simplified texture environment. They're happy having a flat floor, and if there's a horribly scary object, like a barrel, they don't want you colliding with it, so they just put a big square box around it," says Lead Designer Toby Gard. "We've gone in completely the opposite direction, and Rhama collides 100% with everything he sees, down to the smallest bit of detail. He's clambering all over it. It's the real thing."



■ Combat takes place from a first-person view, using the lock-on system.



■ Another companion is Mihoko — "the ultimate kung-fu badass," as the game's producer calls her — whose skills figure largely in the combat and action scenes.

# → Alphas



■ The game's six locations vary widely in their scenery and atmosphere, and every single one is utterly huge



how you use objects, how you fight characters. It's even a part of getting around the environments if you want to do it that way."

Objects that can be interacted with become highlighted when the lock-on cursor moves over them, but the game gives numerous other clues, visually through the graphics and textures, and also through sound, to how Rhama can



■ The game offers a mix of exploration and several different kinds of puzzles, from the typical "find the key" to using your friends to fight enemies and recover items



use his environment, or how his environment can affect him. "We've integrated his movement with our physics system," explains Confounding Factor's Lead Programmer Chris Tector. "So he has full friction across all the different surfaces. You have to watch your environment and try and work your way around and try to deal with it. That even includes subtle things like moss, which blends in. The friction is continually changing over that, and so when the footsteps are loose you can hear the sound of the moss, and you can tell you're getting into a slippery situation. The actual way the environment looks is totally about the gameplay. It's not just pleasant visual effect."

Rhama's companions play their part as well. He's accompanied by Faith as well as by Calverly, a shipwright and friend of Rhama's whom Jabez has turned into a

monkey, and by Mihoko, "the ultimate kung-fu badass... straight-up the best way to describe her," Buchert cracks. (It would seem that Gard's post-Tomb Raider resolution that his next lead character would be male has barely put a dent in his affinity for tough women). Each character has his or her own unique set of skills, and although you cannot control them directly, you can give them commands to carry out different actions, so Mihoko will figure heavily into combat situations, while Calverly's agility and small size enable him to reach otherwise inaccessible locations.

Such a dynamic combination of action, exploration, and numerous categories of puzzle-solving would seem to be a serious juggling act for the design team, but Confounding Factor put together a blueprint and has stuck to it. "Everything has been designed for a long time," Gard

## A CUT ABOVE

All of Gollco's cut scenes take place within the game engine, but it yet another unique touch, some of them are at least partially interactive. At times, you will retain some control over Rhama as other characters chat with him. Also, the game uses a fairly well-implemented lip-synching and facial animation system, so conversations should also look terrific.





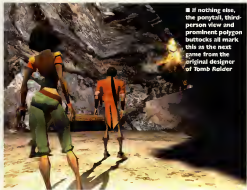
■ **Toby Gard insists that little of the game's action will rely on throwing levers, and, he promises, "There will be absolutely no blocks to push in this game"**

insists. "The script for the game was written around the puzzles, and the whole story is integrated with the gameplay. You can't have one without the other, and to keep the gameplay interesting each level is very different in its layout and design. Some levels are very combat-oriented, others have none. There are even levels with subgames."

Indeed, Goleon has been in development for over three years, and little about it has changed conceptually since the idea was first conceived. The development time has been spent building the physics model, the skeletal

animation system, the level editors, the collision system, graphics effects, and every other nuts-and-bolts detail. Work progressed until all facets of the game could fit comfortably within the highly ambitious design document, without making compromises.

"Part and parcel, [Toby] stayed true to his vision of what the game is from square one, building the tools to build the tools to make the game," Buchert says. "And now we're there. Our main focus for the last year has been gameplay, gameplay, gameplay." And the end is in sight. Confounding Factor hopes to bring



■ **If nothing else, the ponytail, third-person view and prominent polygon buttocks all mark this as the next game from the original designer of Tomb Raider**

Goleon out this fall, as a launch (or just post-launch) title for either Xbox or GameCube, with PlayStation 2 and PC versions out shortly thereafter.

Watching Rhama's easy athleticism, navigating a series of stalagmites, sliding down a drain tunnel, or running up a wall into a backflip and landing square on his feet, is enough to impress. "We just can't play other third-person games anymore," Gard concludes. And if he and the other members of Confounding Factor have anything to do with it, after Goleon hits the stores, none of the rest of us will have to either. —Jeff Lundrigan/Nigel Edge

**"The script for the game was written around the puzzles, and the whole story is integrated with the gameplay. You can't have one without the other."**

— Toby Gard

■ **Take a closer look at this screen, and you'll quickly realize that's a gap-jawed monster looting over Rhama. A number of the game's creatures are simply huge**



■ Angel Studios created a whole new engine for this sequel, which both looks incredible and will be locked at 60fps

■ **PLAYSTATION 2**

## SMUGGLER'S RUN 2: HOSTILE TERRITORY

■ Publisher: **Rockstar Games** ■ Developer: **Angel Studios** ■ Release Date: **October** ■ Origin: **US**

➔ Rockstar recently unveiled its upcoming sequel to one of PS2's best launch titles. The vehicles and cargo are military in style this time, and the action will range from ancient ruins in Afghanistan to a Vietnamese fishing village, with environmental hazards ranging from minefields to avalanches. Your cargo is more sensitive as well. Certain weapons will break or detonate if treated roughly, and some hazardous materials will explode if not delivered within a certain amount of time.



■ Like everything else, competing vehicles' AI has been beefed up



■ Vehicle models will take damage now, and they continue to get more and more detailed. Check out the drive chain on this ATV



■ Mission variety has increased, and you may wind up escorting — or attacking — a convoy

■ This is just a preliminary player interface, but it reveals a planned locational damage model



■ PC

# ZERO-G MARINES

■ Publisher **Strategy First** ■ Developer **Strategy First** ■ Release Date: **TBA 2002** ■ Origin: **Canada**

➔ Rainbow Six-style, squad-based tactical action meets System Shock in this upcoming title from Strategy First. The player must reclaim a series of space stations that have been taken over by a group of mind-controlled, bioengineered activists. There are several storylines and endings (à la Deus Ex), and, true to the game's title, much of the action takes place not only in the halls of the afflicted stations, but in the cold vacuum that surrounds them.



■ Not all the action takes place in weightless space; while inside a station, you're in a controlled, simulated gravity.

■ Can squad-based tactical action make free-space combat more exciting than Moonraker?



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# → Milestones

■ Much of the game is about getting onto the roofs, which can be done with weapons ranging from grenades and machine guns to bricks and trash cans

■ PLAYSTATION 2

## STATE OF EMERGENCY

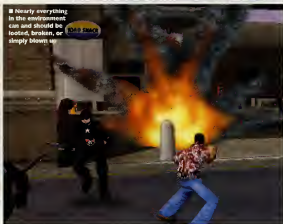
■ Publisher: Rockstar Games ■ Developer: Via Entertainment ■ Release Date: Fall ■ Origin: UK

➔ Leave it to the minds behind the subversive gameplay concepts of *Smuggler's Run* and *Grand Theft Auto* to come up with an arcade-style game based upon inciting and maintaining a full-scale urban riot. The game charges players with destabilizing the ruling ATO (American Trade Organization, an oppressive corporate entity) any way they can. This typically involves beating up countless riot police and gang members, looting, inciting rioters to attack a specific objective — say, a particular vehicle or store — and destroying everything in sight. Rockstar's Terry Donovan promises the finished product will boast a hundred characters onscreen at a time, and he likens the game's feel to that of *Crazy Taxi*.



■ The AI is quite sophisticated. Rival gang members can be baited into attacking one another, and citizens may run, seeking the protection of a policeman — or they may join your cause

■ Nearly everything in the environment can and should be looted, broken, or simply blown up



■ DREAMCAST

# HEAVY METAL: GEOMATRIX

■ Publisher: **Capcom** ■ Developer: **Capcom** ■ Release Date: **Q2 (Japan)**  
■ Origin: **Japan**

➔ Capcom recently unveiled this PowerStone 2-style brawler, which is indeed based upon the revered *Heavy Metal* adult comic series. The 12 initially selectable characters were designed by comic artist Simon Bisley, and in keeping with the game's namesake, the soundtrack will incorporate new music from such heavy metal standbys as Megadeth and Iron Maiden.

■ For some reason, the game reuses the engine from *Spown*. Pray very hard that someone new is programming the camera.



■ The arcade version (shown here) uses the PS2-based System 246 board, so the PS2 port should be quite faithful to the original.

■ ARCADE, PLAYSTATION 2

# JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE 5 (TENTATIVE)

■ Publisher: **Capcom** ■ Developer: **Capcom** ■ Release Date: **Summer (Japan)** ■ Origin: **Japan**

➔ Though Capcom's attempt to move the beloved *Street Fighter* series into 3D has been met with a lukewarm reception, we're optimistic that Jojo will fare better. Capcom is including interactive environments (again, as in *PowerStone*), and frankly the last game wasn't very good to begin with. As before, each combatant will rely on the power of their "Stand" — an ethereal, symbiotic warrior spirit.

■ ARCADE

# INU NO SANPO (WALK THE DOG)

■ Publisher: **Sega** ■ Developer: **Sega** ■ Release Date: **Spring (Japan)**  
■ Origin: **Japan**

➔ Having masterfully represented the anglers who hunt the leviathans of both fresh and salt waters, Sega's arcade division has set out to similarly portray that modern cowboy: the dog walker. Game parameters involve your walking pace, hitting checkpoints while still letting your canine go where it wants, and avoiding hazards like traffic and tummysauce-causing fog left in the path. If and when a home version is announced, expect the usual assortment of unlockable items like colored leashes and new lures.



■ We're not fooled by the "dog walking" premise. This is clearly some kind of brutal, inhumane dog walking game.

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# → Cover Story





# STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER: ROGUE SQUADRON II

■ Publisher: LucasArts ■ Developer: LucasArts/Factor 5 ■ Release Date: GameCube Launch ■ Origin: US

In this first-ever look at a GameCube game, we can tell you straight off, this one alone may make the system worth owning

**S** Add Rogue Leader: Rogue Squadron II to the list currently made up of Metal Gear Solid 2, Block and White, and Gran Turismo 3.

What list is this? Quite simply, the short list of hardware movers for 2001 — new games so impressive that each may convince you to buy the required hardware just to play it. Even in its early form, Rogue Leader transcends the barriers of software and dumps you ass-first into a rebel fighter's cockpit. Never have we seen a game this early in development come so close to capturing the essence of the movie it's based upon. But don't get too comfortable —

you're going headfirst at 60 frames per second into an uphill battle against an evil Empire.

As you'd expect, the premise for this single-player game (sorry — no multiplayer options) isn't that different from the first Rogue Squadron. You play as the two main pilots, Luke Skywalker and, later, Wedge Antilles, flying various missions with multiple objectives, in different locales and a variety of rebel fighters. From either a cockpit or chase-camera perspective, you battle the Empire across II missions in, at various times, X-Wings, A-Wings, B-

■ View to a Star Destroyer — This in-game screenshot was taken from the cockpit view. Each of the five fighters the player pilots in the game offers its own 3D cockpit perspective.

# → Cover Story



■ Here's the Death Star's trench run, in real-time from the chase-camera perspective. Note the impressive lighting and geometry.



■ The B-Wing is used in a series of missions. Factor 5 has done a wonderful job modeling the ship, complete with rounded edges.

Wings, Y-Wings, and Snowspeeders. But that's about where the similarities end. Factor 5 has harnessed the power of GameCube to bring the shooter to a deeper level of immersion.

"The sense of realism is pretty damn impressive," says LucasArts Producer Brett Tosti. "Just the fact that you can attack Star Destroyers in the detail that you really saw in the movie — there are these huge guns coming out of it."

## You're going headfirst at 60 frames per second into an uphill battle against an evil Empire.

It's true. Anyone doubting GameCube's ability to perform can put those fears to rest. When we looked at the level where players attack a Star Destroyer in a B-Wing, it became instantaneously evident that this is a much different Star Wars

## STAR WARS: A GAMER'S RETROSPECTIVE

Arguably the most enduring license in gaming, the four Star Wars films have spawned 39 published games — with more coming. We've assembled a list of every released Star Wars game, excluding a few educational titles. (Compiled by Eric Brotzer)



**STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**  
Platform: Alan 2600 (1982), Intellivision (1982)  
Publisher: Parker Brothers  
Developer: Parker Brothers

The very first Star Wars game, was a vaguely Defender-style 2D shooter. Your mission: Vanquish an endless wave of AT-Arts. The secret: Shoot blinking weak point.



**STAR WARS: THE FORCE UNLEASHED**  
Platform: Arcade, C64 (1985), 3200, 5200, Coleco/Vislon (1984)  
Publisher: Atari, Parker Brothers  
Developer: Atari, Parker Brothers

Atari's arcade classic placed you in an X-Wing cockpit for the Death Star battle. The vector graphics were predictably butchered in later home versions.



**STAR WARS: JEDI ARENA**  
Platform: Alan 2600 (1983)  
Publisher: Parker Brothers  
Developer: Parker Brothers

A one-on-one light saber duel with an overhead view. Players tried to spear their opponent with light-saber-generated bolts, while avoiding the "Seeker" ball in the screen's center.



**STAR WARS: DEATH STAR BATTLE**  
Platform: Alan 2600, Alan 5200 (1982)  
Publisher: Parker Brothers  
Developer: Parker Brothers

A Breakout/Var's Revenge-style space shooter in which you pilot the Millennium Falcon in an attempt to destroy (what else) the Death Star.



■ GameCube underpowered! Just look at the Star Destroyer exhaust ports (left), completely realized with in-game geometry.



from the ones we've seen on Nintendo 64. "With the Star Destroyer, everything is geometry, even down to the detail on the deck," says Julian Eggebrecht, president of Factor 5 and producer for the development house. Eggebrecht talks comfortably as he demos the level, and, piloting the B-Wing, drops us in for a closer look. The background audio becomes instantly familiar: It's the beautiful orchestral score by John Williams, now in incredible DVD-quality sound, punctuated by the droning cries of passing TIE Fighters. A quick fly-by around the aft end of the Star Destroyer reveals its incredibly large and detailed exhaust ports. "What you are seeing here," Eggebrecht continues, "is a model built with 130,000 polygons."

During our visit to Factor 5, we were privy to the three playable levels that will be featured at the

### TEST-DRIVING GAMECUBE'S CONTROLLER

Going hands-on with the GameCube controller was a pleasant and very natural experience. Despite its odd-looking nature and design, it was very easy to get right into the game. The controller is far more form-fitting to the hand than the Dreamcast or N64 controllers. It feels not unlike holding a PS2 controller and is easily as comfortable to hold. For *Rogue II* in its current form, the shoulder triggers are used to speed and slow your craft; the large A-button fires the lasers; and by holding the Z-trigger and using the analog stick, you can barrel-roll your ship. In the cockpit view, the C-stick enables you to maneuver your camera.



upcoming E3 tradeshow. One of these is the game's very first level, which takes its inspiration straight from the first *Star Wars* arcade game. You must take your X-Wing into the deadly trench to make that one-in-a-million shot and destroy the Death Star. "In fact," Eggebrecht says, "we're taking quiet a bit of inspiration from the old Atari game."

Sure enough, we found ourselves skimming over the surface of the Death Star, shooting out the gun

turrets placed atop tall spires. We even shot at the occasional TIE Fighters crossing our path, and having completely destroyed the wing of one, we watched as it went spiraling into its demise in an explosive crash onto the Death Star's surface. At the risk of repetition — it was just like in the movie.

There's also the aforementioned Star Destroyer attack in the B-Wing, and in the third level, we took an A-Wing into some heated dogfights



**STAR WARS: RETURN OF THE JEDI**  
Platform: Arcade (1984)  
Publisher: Atari  
Developer: Atari

After the success of its original vector-style shooter, Atari unfortunately went in exactly the opposite direction with this unimproved, somewhat ratchet-blaster.



**STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**  
Platform: Arcade (1980), Sega Master System (1993)  
Publisher: JVC  
Developer: Beam Software

The "new" game was actually just a conversion of the original *Star Wars* arcade game, substituting probe droids and walkers for TIE fighters and towers.



**STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**  
Platform: NES (1991), Sega Master System (1993)  
Publisher: JVC  
Developer: Beam Software

Play as Luke Skywalker (among others) in all his 2D, spritely glory. This was the first in JVC's series of platform shooters, known for their level variety and high degree of difficulty.



**STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**  
Platform: NES (1992)  
Publisher: JVC  
Developer: Sculptured Software

Another of JVC's side-scrolling frustration-generating machines. Overly challenging and full of chaotic deaths, just as its predecessor was. And no, you couldn't slice open the Turbans.



**SUPER STAR WARS**  
Platform: SNES (1992)  
Publisher: JVC  
Developer: Sculptured Software

JVC's chronically difficult 3D platform series moves to SNES, complete with occasional Mode 7, first- and third-person vehicular segments. And as seen above, the very deadly, laser-talized sand lobsters of Tatooine.



# → Cover Story

■ Bespin, shown here, is not — we repeat NOT — pre-rendered. Players will literally be able to land their A-Wings (above) and switch ships mid-mission. Look for a Cloud Car in this level

with TIE Fighters over the cloud city of Bespin.

Every level will feature familiar locations, and listening to Tosti describe the overall mission sequence sounds as if he's reciting a list of the greatest battle scenes from the original movie trilogy.

"The story really starts with the destruction of the Death Star," Tosti says. "We go to Hoth, escape Hoth, go

through asteroid fields. Then we get word that there's information for a second Death Star, and there's a whole series of missions that leads you to that, and then it climaxes with the attack on the second Death Star. Beyond that, we have a whole series of bonus missions that are outside of the whole story arc." These are unlocked by earning medals, just as in the original *Rogue Squadron*. Tosti would prefer to surprise players with the nature of these missions, but he did say that "they are the cool things that people would like to do from the movies." We also managed to learn of one bonus mission during our visit: Hop In Darth Vader's Advanced TIE Fighter over the Death Star, and shoot down incoming X-Wings. (Sounds like a pretty good reason to earn medals.)

**While the original *Rogue Squadron* went on to sell more than a million copies, there were criticisms about**

the game's speed and interface. The team is working on giving players a better impression of speed and building the radar in 3D. But without question, it's the AI that should bring *Rogue Leader* to the next level.

Factor 5 has dedicated one programmer solely to the task of creating the necessary code to give both enemy fighters and your CPU-piloted squadron members better free-roaming capabilities.

"One of the main criticisms of the first *Rogue*," says Eggebrecht, "was that [the enemy AI path] was all on rails. The TIEs are not stupid anymore. Basically, if you're chasing one, when you hit it, it actually tries to evade and dogfight with you." This became obvious to us as soon as we engaged a TIE Fighter over Bespin. After putting a well-placed shot into the back of a TIE, it went into a frenzy of evasive maneuvers, quickly escaping as we vainly tried to finish it off.



**SUPER STAR WARS: EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**  
Platform: SNES (1993)  
Publisher: JVC  
Developer: Sculptured Software

JVC's second 3D side-scroller for SNES adds force powers and is slightly less difficult, but it still wasn't very much fun.



**REBEL ASSAULT**  
Platform: 3DO, Sega CD, PC (1993), Mac (1994)  
Publisher: JVC, LucasArts  
Developer: LucasArts

An FMV shooter on rails that was hindered — like many early CD-ROM titles — by relentless substitution of canned video and sound in place of actual gameplay.



**X-Wing**  
Platform: PC (1993)  
Publisher: LucasArts  
Developer: Totally Games  
Expansions: Imperial Pursuit, B-Wing

The first Star Wars game designed for PC was also the first game in Lorny Holland's long-running series of excellent space dogfighting sims.



**STAR WARS**  
Platform: Arcade (1993), 32X (1993), Star Wars Arcade (1994)  
Publisher: Sega  
Developer: AM3

This obscure arcade shooter that enabled players to assault the Death Star while piloting either an X-Wing or Y-Wing. Later, as a 32X launch title, it proved how useless the 32X really was.



**STAR WARS CHESS**  
Platform: PC (1993), Sega CD (1994)  
Publisher: Software Toolworks  
Developer: Software Toolworks

Weak attempt at updating chess, inspired by, but not remotely as entertaining as, the famous T2-D2 vs. Chewbacca match in *Star Wars*.

"The sense of realism is pretty damn impressive... Just the fact that you can attack Star Destroyers in the detail that you really saw in the movie."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Brent Smith, producer, LucasArts



■ As Rogue Leader, you're given command of two wingmen. Here they are flanking the player's X-Wing.

Edgebrecht consoled us by explaining that Bespin will be the eighth level of the game, and as such, the TIEs are considerably more difficult to shoot.

Aside from creating more believable enemy ships, the team has come up with a unique new way to make you feel like you are the leader of the Squadron: giving you the power to command two wingmen. "This happens roughly 10 times a mission," says Tosti. "You can tell them, 'form up on me, and give me

some protection.' You can tell them to go after specific targets... You may want your wingmen to help take out missile turrets while you take out TIEs, or vice versa."

Sure enough, in the course of the demo, a special cross-shaped display, which you use to command your wingmen, appeared in the upper left-hand corner of the screen. As players pilot their ship via the analog stick, the D-pad is used to issue commands. A quick press on the D-pad in one of

the four compass directions issues one of four different commands. The developers explain that the idea is to balance the level of participation by the Squadron, giving players the feeling they are part of a group, and as the group leader, their actions have repercussions that affect the rest. "If you notice, one of the wingmen commands is 'flee,'" Edgebrecht says. "If your wingmen are getting pounded by laser fire, one of them may get really weak and may call in saying,



#### SUPER RETURN OF THE JEDI

Platform: SNES (1994)  
Publisher: JVC  
Developer: Sculptured Software

The last of JVC's side-view platform/third-person vehicular adventure hybrids. The high point: the joy of dying intrinsically on the level where you play as an Ewok.



#### TIE FIGHTER

Platform: PC (1994)  
Publisher: LucasArts  
Developer: Totally Games  
Expansion: Defender of the Empire

Larry Holland's second PC aim was even better than the original X-Wing. It places the player in the role of an Imperial pilot trying simply to keep the peace.



#### DARK FORCES

Platforms: PC, CD-ROM (1990), PlayStation (1996)  
Publisher: LucasArts, Big Bang Software  
Developer: LucasArts

Star Wars moves into the era of the modern FPS. Players control Kyle Katarn, a Rebel-hired mercenary investigating a new, vicious strain of Imperial soldier



#### REBEL ASSAULT II: THE HIDDEN EMPIRE

Platform: PC, Mac (1995), PlayStation (1996)  
Publisher: LucasArts  
Developer: LucasArts, Factor 5

Like the first game, this sequel blends dogfighting with on-foot adventure and featured live-action cut scenes. It didn't improve much either.



#### SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

Platform: PC, N64 (1997)  
Publisher: Nintendo of America  
Developer: LucasArts

This successful, if inconsistent, early N64 title assembled a mix of gameplay styles, from on-foot first- or third-person shooting to piloting a snowspeeder, swoop, or Dash Rendar's Outrider.

# → Cover Story



Factor 5 insists these explosions are still early examples. They are planning on making them better and including more particle effects.



"Luke, I'm about to die. What should I do?" If you then lead him to his death, you probably won't get a gold medal, because you have to save your wingmen. So at the appropriate times you have to send them away. Other times, they may even call and ask for your assistance."

The wingmen will also assist lesser pilots who may need a little more help. Tosti explains that the wingmen will provide "dynamic difficulty adjustment." This relatively new term

is being used by designers industry-wide to refer to a game's ability to track how well players are doing and adjust the difficulty to keep them from repetitive failure. For example, if the player is doing well, Tosti explains, the wingmen will fly around and try to shoot some targets. "But," Tosti explains, "if you aren't doing well, dying a number of times, and your shot percentage is bad, your wingmen will come in and show you what to attack." Of course, the more



**STAR WARS MONOPOLY**  
Platform: PC (1997)  
Publisher: Hasbro Interactive  
Developer: Artech studios

Not exactly the interactive medium's state-of-the-art Star Wars show piece. Here's the classic board game as it appeared long ago in a galaxy far, far away. Go directly to the Death Star, do not collect \$200.



**X-WING VS. TIE FIGHTER**  
Platform: PC (1997)  
Publisher: LucasArts  
Developer: Totally Games  
Expansions: Balance of Power

The third in Totally Games' long-running series of PC titles introduced classic-for-multiplayer features, though the single-player storyline suffered as a result.



**YODA STORIES**  
Platform: PC (1997)  
Publisher: LucasArts  
Developer: LucasArts

Less a game than an interactive screen saver, this primitive title featured a super-deformed Luke performing various tasks for Yoda. It was clearly aimed at the "I play computer Solitaire during my coffee break" set.



**JEDI KNIGHT: DARK FORCES II**  
Platform: PC (1997)  
Publisher: LucasArts  
Developer: LucasArts  
Expansions: Mysteries of the Sith

The antebellum sequel to Jedi Knight where players, as Kyle Katarn, could choose the light or dark disciplines of the force.

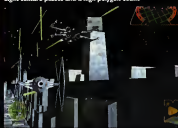


**STAR WARS: MASTERS OF DECEIT**  
Platform: PlayStation (1997)  
Publisher: LucasArts  
Developer: LucasArts

The infamous 30 fighting game was weakened by stiff controls and stiffer animation. The cast included Vader, Boba Fett, the Gamorrean guard, and Arden Lyn, whom you will never see again.



■ This up-close look at the TIE fighter (left) reveals the kind of detail that can be achieved with eight texture passes and a high polygon count.



assistance players require of the wingmen, the less likely they are to win any medals. But it's one way to keep the Force-less wonders from getting too frustrated and quitting the game altogether.

Factor 5's technical achievements on *Rogue Leader* are proof enough that GameCube is a machine worthy of the "next generation" moniker. The graphics have a very crisp feel to them, which can be attributed to the combination of full-scene anti-aliasing and a 60fps framerate. The machine has no trouble handling eight texture passes per polygonal surface, and, according to Eggebrecht, the machine handles incredible amounts of geometry without compromising any of the texture effects. Gone are the N64 days of the blurry textures; GameCube's texture compression technique has enabled Factor 5 to bring enormous amounts of textures

to the Star Wars universe at fairly large texture sizes. The team has bump-mapped every texture in the game and has added other effects including specular, dirt maps, and even illumination maps. Want an example of an illumination map? In a night level on Bespin, the buildings' windows will light up, courtesy of the illumination maps designed for the window areas.

There are even more effects that help create a more believable environment, though you wouldn't necessarily notice them individually if Eggebrecht weren't around to point them out. In Bespin, he calls our attention to a reflection map of the sky that was made for the entire cityscape. "It's very subtle," Eggebrecht says. "That's what really fits [the buildings] into the scenery." But he's quick to note that the actual lighting is all being done in realtime. "The sun is really reflecting

**"The TIEs are not stupid anymore... They actually try to evade and dogfight with you."**

—Julian Eggebrecht, president/producer, Factor 5

on those buildings — that isn't in the textures, and the machine is handling it well. We're surprised, almost on a daily basis, how much we can throw at thing."

Looking at the environments, it's not surprising to hear that many of the development team members who worked on N64's *Rogue Squadron* are back for the sequel, including several level designers and artists. One of the sentiments the team expressed was that the tools are so powerful, they've had more time to work on the actual content. Perhaps that's why we're not too surprised to hear Tosti say, "We're having lots of little cameos. When



**STAR WARS: REBELLION**  
Platform: PC (1999)  
Publisher: LucasArts  
Developer: Coolhead Interactive

This RTS enabled players to build their own empire, featuring characters from the *Star Wars* books as well as the films. As the story goes, a Next Gen editor actually fell asleep during the first demo of this game. Oops.



**STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON**  
Platforms: N64, PC (as *Rogue Squadron 3D*) (1998)  
Publisher: LucasArts  
Developer: Factor 5

The second N64 game proved to be a charm. Luke and Wedge's 15-level dogfighting adventure spans the empire — from Tatooine to Kessel's space mines.



**STAR WARS TRILOGY ARCADE**  
Platforms: Arcade (1999)  
Publisher: Sega  
Developer: Sega

An amazing Model-3 shooter that begins with *Star Wars*' climactic Battle of Yavin and ends with the destruction of the second Death Star. Use the Force, but bring lots of quarters.



**STAR WARS: EPISODE I THE PHANTOM MENACE**  
Platforms: PC, N64 (1999), DC (2000)  
Publisher: LucasArts  
Developer: LucasArts

One of the better Episode I-themed games, this title follows the pod racing circuit at breakneck speed through 21 exotic tracks.



**STAR WARS: EPISODE I THE PHANTOM MENACE**  
Platforms: PC, PlayStation (1999)  
Publisher: LucasArts  
Developer: Big Ape Productions

This 3D action adventure attempted to blend Episode I's plot with Gauntlet-style gameplay, but proved ultimately unfilling.



# → Cover Story



■ Note the wingmen command options in the upper left corner of these screenshots (above, below). Press the D-pad in one of the four directions, and they'll follow that order.



you go to Bespin, you may hear Lando or see his vehicles. When you're attacking the Death Star, you may hear Obi Wan... We're trying to

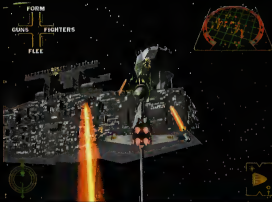
bring in as many established Star Wars characters as possible." In tackling the new GameCube hardware, some of the designers are

sharing the art duties, and the artists and level designers feel they are benefiting from a shared workspace. The results are lush, detailed environments that are designed from the start to work within the game engine's limitations. Even the game's music composer is working in-house at Factor 5 — not surprising as Factor 5 is also providing, for Nintendo, GameCube's suite of sound design tools, called "MusyX." Moreover, having the composer in-house has enabled the team to capture the perfect musical ambience for each level. This is exactly how games become a cohesive experience even at a pre-alpha stage, and Rogue Leader is a shining example of this.

But some of the more ambitious

**"I feel like we can finally give players the experience they've always wanted."**

— Julian Rappoport



**STAR WARS: X-WING ALLIANCE**  
Platform: PC (1999)  
Publisher: LucasArts  
Developer: Totally Games

Holland's final Star Wars-based space combat epic. Players control the one and only Millennium Falcon — though not as Han Solo.



**STAR WARS: EPISODE I: THE GUNGAN FRONTIER**  
Platform: PC (1999)  
Publisher: Lucas Learning  
Developer: Lucas Learning

A young-skewing (ages 9 and up), 3D City-based, work-building game in which the player must establish a viable ecosystem on one of Naboo's moons.



**STAR WARS: PIT DROIDS**  
Platform: PC (1998)  
Publisher: Lucas Learning  
Developer: Lucas Learning

Despite being fundamentally a children's puzzle game, this title is actually regarded as one of the better recent Star Wars games.



**STAR WARS: DEMOLITION**  
Platform: DC, PSX (2000)  
Publisher: LucasArts  
Developer: Luxoflex

The developer of Vigilante 8 mixed its vehicular-combat chocolate with the Star Wars universe peanut butter, but what resulted wasn't nearly as good as something from Reese's.



**STAR WARS: EPISODE I: BATTLE FOR NABOO**  
Platform: N64 (2000), PC (2001)  
Publisher: LucasArts  
Developer: Factor 5

This poor N64 flight combat game was even worse in its PC version. It really begs the question: Was Naboo actually worth saving to begin with?



levels are still too early to show. To hear *lost* describe the battle on the ice planet of Hoth, it's obviously going to be more than just snowspeeders against an empty plane of the Empire's walkers. "We're doing Hoth's AT-AT attack to much greater detail," he says. "We're going to have ground squads of snowtroopers running from foxhole to foxhole, and you can strafe those guys, and you'll have the Rebel troops out there fighting. It will be a complete battleground — not just 'here are the

AT-ATs, go and take down the AT-ATs."

If there is another universe remotely as inspirational as the one Lucas has created with *Star Wars*, please point us toward it. Nothing has captured the imagination of the staff of this magazine the way *Star Wars* has, and nothing else probably ever will. This is why we cannot underscore the importance of Julian Eggebrecht's final comment: "I feel like we can finally give players the experience they've always wanted."

If the team at factor 5 delivers on this ambition — and it most certainly looks like the Force is with them — Eggebrecht and crew may actually one-up of George Lucas himself. Twenty-four years after the first film, we'll really know how it feels to be Luke Skywalker, the fighter pilot, barreling down the trench of the Death Star. That isn't just the beauty of a next-generation GameCUBE game — it is the realized, certifiable magic that is this medium.

— Tom Russo



**STAR WARS: FORCE COMMANDER**

Platform: PC (2000)  
 Publisher: LucasArts  
 Developer: Raven Entertainment

LucasArts' second attempt at an RTS started as a 2D game and switched to 3D, keeping it in development for over 3 years. It released with little Force power.



**STAR WARS: EPISODE I JEDI POWER BATTLES**

Platform: PSOne, DC (2000)  
 Publisher: LucasArts  
 Developer: LucasArts

This unapologetic 3D (yet side-view) platform-action game with several playable Jedi proved once more that Battle Oreds are no substitute for *Star Wars*ers.



**STAR WARS: JANGO FETT'S ARCADE**

Platform: Arcade (2000)  
 Publisher: Sega  
 Developer: AM2

Despite a heavy similarity to *Star Wars: Episode I Racer*, Sega's excellent arcade machine is actually an entirely independent, albeit thematically themed, game.



**STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT 2**

Platform: PlayStation 2 (2001)  
 Publisher: LucasArts  
 Developer: LucasArts

The first *Star Wars* title for PS2. The stunning fight combat game was based in the *Episode I* timeline, complete with great graphics and three playable characters.



**STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT**

Platform: PS2, PC (2001)  
 Publisher: Lucas Learning  
 Developer: Lucas Learning

The Oresmost version may be *Bantha Fodder* — cancelled, that is — but PC and PS2 kart-racing fans can guide a bag-headed Yoda to victory. Sorry, you are.



The white flag's been waved, and Dreamcast has become the first casualty of the next-generation console war. Which consoles will Sega rally behind? Will there be any new Dreamcast games? (Yes.) Going into this year's big E3 trade show, we examine...

# SEGA'S NEXT MOVE

The plan to rebuild a great videogame empire



"Anticipation." That's the word Sega President and COO Peter Moore

chooses to describe the mood in the Sega office now that the company is transitioning out of the hardware business. A brave new world of opportunity has opened up for Sega now that it has freed itself from the shackles of a single platform. The company has already planted a flag in the multi-platform market, having announced *Virtua Fighter 4* and several other games for PlayStation 2, and more recently, announcing that it is working on 11 Xbox titles.

"The [third-party] publishing world has a very powerful member joining," forewarns Moore. "Very few companies can bring the amount of talent, characters, and franchises to this business that Sega can."

Simply put, the Dreamcast didn't work out. The challenges of creating a viable installed base have been widely reported, and at the end of the year Sega will leave 4.5 million Dreamcast owners without any further plans to support the system. But despite Sega's exit from the

hardware business, the Dreamcast bridged a significant gap in videogame history between PlayStation and Nintendo 64, and other next-generation consoles. Sega now enters the third-party publishing market with guns blazing, building on old and recently established intellectual properties such as *VF4*, *Spoce Chonnel 5*, and *Sokuro Wars* for PS2, as well as *Jet Grind Rodio Future*, *Sego GT*, and *Panzer Dragoon* [see News, page 04] for Xbox. With Sony, Microsoft, and Nintendo shelling out millions to market their game consoles, Sega seems poised for a successful ride on their coattails.

## That Was Then, This Is Now

But bringing a company from first-party console manufacturer to platform-agnostic publisher can't be done overnight. First, there's the task of changing foes into friends, and that starts with Sony, Microsoft, and Nintendo. Of course, there's been plenty of competitive silliness, such as the barbecue that Sega staged outside Sony's press conference

at last year's E3, where Sonic roasted little Crash Bandicoot dolls. But in the end, there's too much money at stake to harbor bad feelings. In fact, there's no doubt Sega has been wined and dined by the remaining first-party console manufacturers as they try to lock down system-selling exclusives, much in the same way Sega courted Namco for Dreamcast's *Soul Collbur*. "Everyone's going to try to get exclusive Sega games, but we're going to do what's best for Sega," says Moore.

Sega has already linked agreements to publish games for PS2 and Xbox, and a GameCube announcement at E3 is inevitable, especially with Sega Game Boy Advance titles already available in Japan. Moore admits he can work out favorable deals for his company, but doesn't think he's receiving any better treatment than the type EA can demand. "I don't want to do deals where I'm at a disadvantage with anybody," he explains. "I don't need to do that, and the deals we've struck with our console partners are competitive in the marketplace. What would be a challenge is if

**"Everyone's going to try [to get exclusive Sega games], but we're going to do what's best for Sega."**

— Peter Moore, president and COO, Sega

**HIDEKI SATO**  
president,  
Sega Corp.

Hideki Sato is a lifetime Sega employee and was formerly COO of the company. Although part of Sega's inner circle, expect Sato to lead Sega toward new horizons — he was one of the first in the console business to decry the lack of innovation in the traditional videogame industry and was an early proponent of a network-centric strategy for Sega.



**Next Gen:** What role does Sega now play in the game industry?  
**Hideki Sato:** Sega is a strong development company, so any console to succeed, a Sega title is very important. Every platform maker thinks so.

**NG:** Your sports titles have done very well in the U.S. How important are they to your next-gen plans?  
**HS:** More than half the U.S. software library will be done by Sega Sports.

**NG:** Will Sega continue to pursue games in unproven categories, like *Samurai* and *Samba de Amigo*?  
**HS:** Yes. Although every title has a risk factor, we have to challenge. Though some Sega games were not commercial successes, we must continue to challenge the gamer with new experiences or they'll get tired of our games.

**NG:** But haven't risky games, even *Shenmue*, hurt Sega?  
**HS:** If we think of just the software business, very honestly speaking, we have not recovered yet. But when I think of the development advances we learned that can be applied to other games, that investment will someday be recouped.

**NG:** Now that Dreamcast is being phased out, what would gamers find most surprising about the system?  
**HS:** In the beginning, Dreamcast was going to have a water-cooled system, like a car. But the water-cooler system is more expensive than the conventional heat sink, so we ended up making that change.

someone got a sweetheart deal and we didn't, but I can assure you that no one is dismissing Sega and giving us a run-of-the-mill deal."

**New Developments**

Although Sega prides itself on its intellectual properties and franchises, the company's success will hinge on what it does with them. It's true that part of the marketing battle has already been fought in branding characters like *Utala* and *Sonic*, but gamers will expect new experiences on their



■ Visual Concepts concedes that EA has a head start in Madden (above), but not as long a lead as many believe



■ Peter Moore repeatedly hypothesized how well-received Sonic would be on GameCUBE. We say it's just a matter of time...

new platforms. This shouldn't be a problem for Sega's development teams. Sources indicate that after last May's internal reorganization, many of Sega's nine studios (which make up a workforce of more than 1,000 people) began inquiring about working on non-Sega hardware.

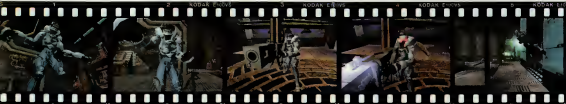
Now each group has been given a level of autonomy over what platform each pursues. Moore thinks that platform strategies will depend on skill sets, and he points to Smilebit's PC background as a reason the team is working on *Gunvolyrite* for the PC-development-friendly

**YU SUZUKI**  
director,  
AM2

Few development companies can be mentioned in the same sentence with Sega's internal teams, and Yu Suzuki is a big reason why. The man responsible for *Out Run*, *Shenmue*, and the *Virtua Fighter* series now moves to PlayStation 2, and few industry developments have created such a buzz. Why all the commotion? Back during the days of Sega Saturn, Suzuki didn't want anything to do with the complicated new platform, but he ended up making *Virtua Fighter 3*, one of the most stunning games for the console. Now Suzuki is working on *Virtua Fighter 4* for another new, complicated platform in PlayStation 2.

"I respect Yu Suzuki as a game designer," says Tomonobu Itagaki, head of Team Ninja at Tecmo. "Every project he's been involved in has raised expectations of the industry." Those "raised expectations" have already surfaced in VFI. The arcade version was met with great fanfare at the recent AOU coin-up show in Japan, showcasing complex, interactive environments and refined character models (NG 05 01).

So will having Suzuki's team working on PS2 tip the console war in Sony's favor? The safe bet is that Microsoft will soon make its own AM2 announcement, because traditionally Suzuki hasn't limited his talents to a single technology. "The bottom line is that the titles are the most important thing," Suzuki said to *Daily Radar*. "The users can choose what hardware they want — it's up to me to make the games."



## "The [third-party] publishing world has a very powerful member joining."

— Peter Moore

### GRIG THOMAS president, Visual Concepts

Visual Concepts put Dreamcast on the map, creating the platform's first system-seller, NFL 2K. EA now has some stiff competition, and it looks like Visual Concepts and EA Sports will push each other to incredible levels of gameplay.

### Next Gen: Does EA have a head start on you in the PS2 sports category?

Greg Thomas: EA definitely has a head start on us with PS2 — just look at Madden 2001. However, they do not have as much of a head start as it may appear from an online perspective, we definitely have an advantage. We have built real modular, robust network code that we will continue to build and adapt as we go along. NFL 2K1 proved that online gaming is the future and online play will be a standard feature that all sports games will need to have — the a franchise mode features.

### NG: What did you learn from developing Dreamcast games that you can use on other platforms?

GT: With our sports games specifically, all of the gameplay code will be used on all platforms. This is a huge advantage for us because we have games that we are already happy with from a gameplay standpoint. So we will add a whole bunch of new features and advance the visuals as much as we can. All of our online designs and code can be used for the new platforms, so we can simply build on it.

### NG: Is it difficult to develop games in a genre, such as sports, that tends to be U.S.-centric?

GT: Although sports games generally perform better in North America, many of our sports games have been published in the Asian market as well. Just as Sega of Japan creates titles specific to the Japanese market, we do the same in the U.S. Of course, we also want to create global titles that can cross over into any culture.

### NG: Do global markets need their own athletes to "star" in a game?

GT: American athletes are popular around the world; Japanese consumers get excited about famous U.S. players and they watch American sports on television, so sports games including American athletes often do well in many other countries.

Xbox. Similarly, it would make sense for Yui Naka's Sonic Team to develop a Sonic game for GameCube that would attract the young audience that gravitates toward the simpler, platform-hopping gameplay. The Sega teams have already developed a strong sense of independence since the split, and the ability to work on different systems should further differentiate them from each other. Given Sega's collective experience developing for proprietary hardware (such as Model 3 and Naomi), the head start taken by new publishing rivals such as EA and Konami on PS2 and Xbox isn't an insurmountable lead. Still, it would be foolish to expect Sega to leap to the top this year.

"We're not at a huge disadvantage versus first-generation PS2 developers, but it will take us some time — we're not making cookies here," cautions Moore. "There's a rhythm to being a publisher, where you have to look up to 24 months ahead and analyze projections. In the first fiscal year [of multi-platform development], we won't be up to speed with all pistons flying because we're going through this transition period away from the hardware business and into the software business. You're still going to see the majority of our revenues driven by Dreamcast software sales this fiscal year, but when the next fiscal year starts April 1, 2002, you'll see us in full flight, and it won't take us long to challenge for the number-one third-

**"We're not at a huge disadvantage versus [first-generation PS2 developers], but it will take us some time — we're not making cookies here."**

— Peter Moore



■ Wow still has Bass Fishing 2 (top) coming for Dreamcast; Smiliebit showed its Xbox development progress at Tokyo Game Show with Gunvalkyrie (bottom)

party publisher spot."

### Saturn, Part 2

When Sega announced it was discontinuing production of Dreamcast, many gamers snickered that Dreamcast was the second coming of the Saturn fiasco. Moore takes issue with this view and points out that the two situations are dissimilar



■ No more EA antics like these: Sonic roasting Crash at Sega's BQ last year

### YUI NAKA president, Sonic Team

Though no longer programming games himself, Yui Naka still comes up with game concepts and has his hands in every Sonic Team project.

Next Gen: How will Phantom Star Online 2 differ from its predecessor? Yui Naka: The biggest difference will be the ability to battle between partners. I still place a very strong significance on cooperation, and the game still involves raising the character yourself and collecting items to use in battle, but this battle mode is for you to challenge yourself and challenge your character.

### NG: Why did you bring Chu Chu Rocket to Game Boy Advance?

YN: I decided a long time ago to develop Chu Chu Rocket for GBA because I considered that GBA wouldn't be a competitor of Dreamcast. Of the 3<sup>rd</sup> party titles for GBA, Chu Chu Rocket will be the only game that has multiplayer capabilities. The important thing about GBA is that you only need one cartridge for two players to play each other. Games and toys are very expensive these days, and I want to make them more accessible to kids.

### NG: Are the technical differences between consoles a challenge?

YN: I don't put much emphasis on the graphics, so the graphics aren't important. From a game creator's point of view, it's very difficult — they're more advanced than I need them to be. I'm searching for other types of improvements besides graphics, and networking is one of them.



because Saturn never really got off the ground. Good Saturn games were only available toward the end, which stunted hardware sales and hurt retailers because they had no price protection on their inventory orders. Dreamcast, Moore

claims, has been very successful for retailers and should still drive software sales through this year. Although Babbage's, Etc. has already begun to phase its Dreamcast inventory to its FuncoLand subsidiary, which specializes in used and discontinued games, a stable of quality titles is still on its way from Sega and its remaining third-party publishers.

These games will include NFL2K2 and other games that, though forthcoming on other platforms, will first be available on Dreamcast (see Dreamcast Survivor's Guide, page 72). "When I look at the Dreamcast lineup and I look at the other platforms, we still have a better lineup of games than anybody else," boasts Moore.

### Online Help

Despite the crash of the Internet economy, many industry insiders still consider the future of gaming to be online. Networked console gaming wasn't attractive enough to gain widespread consumer support for Dreamcast, but Sega broke new ground by proving that online console games are viable. Staying true to its vision of a future in networked gaming, Sega plans to ship the Xbox versions of NFL2K2 and NBA2K2 with online capabilities, even if



■ Designer Tatsuya Mizuguchi says the next Sega Channel 5 game will break from the gameplay of the original and be more like a musical.

**"When I look at the Dreamcast lineup and I look at the other platforms, we still have a better lineup of games than anybody else."**

—Peter Moore

the system doesn't launch with connectivity out of the box. Of course, this hinges on Microsoft supplying the necessary drivers in time, and Moore is vehement in stating that he will not delay the release of a game to add online support — or anything else that could potentially slow Sega's march toward profitability.

"Our hope is the baton will be passed to another [console manufacturer] which shares our vision for online gaming," says Moore. "We have a competitive advantage in narrowband and the knowledge about online to

make these games relatively lag-free in a tough environment, but unless someone else picks up that baton, [our advantage] will be difficult for us to maintain."

Playing against another console gamer who is hundreds of miles away is just one example of Sega Innovation — one that falls alongside giving players the

### TATSUYA MIZUGUCHI lead designer, United Game Artists

Sega thought enough of UGA to throw a lot of money at branding its Ulka character, but the critically acclaimed Space Channel 5 didn't meet with commercial success. With so much invested in creating a new company mascot, you can bet Sega has big plans for the sequel.

**Next Gen:** Why are you excited about developing for other platforms?

Tatsuya Mizuguchi: I'm not unhappy with Dreamcast, but from a creator's point of view I want all the people in the world to be able to play my games.

**NG:** Are PS2 and other next-generation consoles the next step to achieve total?

TM: Not necessarily. I've thought about different media and devices than just consoles. Maybe a portable version, or anything with a keyboard or a cell phone. The cell phone in Japan already has Internet access, and they could install a graphics engine. I really don't intend to provide games to cell phones. I just want to provide some sort of medium to provide communication to the cell phone user. It's a totally different image than they have in America.

**NG:** What's your next big project?

TM: We're doing the next Space Channel 5 on PS2, and it'll be more like a musical. The Japanese version's dialogue became sort of like a trend in the Japanese market, and that's the kind of effect I want to bring into this one. My regret is the dialogue is supposed to be very funny in the Japanese version, but when you translate it to English, the fun was gone.

**NG:** Is it a challenge to be so involved in your team's games?

TM: I'm just working on two titles at the moment, but the producer of the Resident Evil games at Capcom always has about 10 titles running at the same time. I can't handle that. Three game projects are the maximum for me. I can only handle three because my team is at the stage where I'm developing my game creators. Two years ago, I gathered a lot of young people who were inexperienced in the game industry. In the future, maybe we'll have five or more titles in progress at the same time, but I'm cautious because one wrong title can mess up everything.

### SHUN ARAI lead designer, Smilebit

Leading the charge to the Xbox platform is studio head Shun Arai, who told Edge magazine that he had recognized the limitations of Dreamcast

hardware many months ago and that "there are projects which would be impossible to implement on Dreamcast." One such project may be his upcoming Xbox game Gunvalkyrie, a shooter that features soldiers in battlesuits that enable them to perform superhuman attacks. Another is the sequel to Jet Set Radio, which is rumored to give players the capability to download music onto the Xbox hard drive for use in the game.

With a new playground of technical opportunity at its feet, it would be easy for Smilebit to fall into the trap of fixating on fancy graphics instead of gameplay, but the development team appears to have its priorities straight. When asked about the challenges faced by Dreamcast, Arai did not make excuses on technical limitations. "I really do not feel the problem is the hardware," Arai explained to Edge. "It would be too simple, too naive." He thinks a more pressing matter is that Sega had gotten away from making "Sega-looking" games, and hopes to integrate the Sega flavor into each of his upcoming projects — which, judging from past Sega hits, is good news for gamers.

**"Our hope is the baton will be passed to another [console manufacturer] which shares our vision for online gaming."**

—Peter Moore



■ Sega Saturn isn't the final resting place for Panzer Dragoon. This title is one of the first Sega games being resurrected for Xbox.





■ Virtua Fighter 4 was recently shown in arcade form (above), and the PS2 version should bring its stunning graphics into living rooms around the world



**"The first two months I was here, I kept hearing about something called Dolphin, and that seems like a lifetime ago and it still hasn't shipped."**

— Peter Moore, president and COO, Sega

**HISAO OGUCHI**  
president,  
Hit Maker



Hit Maker has earned a solid reputation with recent smashies such as *Crazy Taxi* and *Virtua Tennis* on Dreamcast.

**Next Gen: What's in store for Hit Maker?**

**Hisao Oguchi:** We're developing *Virtua Tennis 2* on Dreamcast, but the next version may go to other systems. We're working on a network-compatible title for a console that's sort of like *Ultima Online*—similar to *Phantasy Star Online*, but intended for a completely different audience.

I'm trying to provide new types of games and new types of gameplay. The current business model requires consumers to buy COs, but I'm trying to provide network games where you only require one CO but you can expand your gameplay, going to whole different worlds through that single CO. I want the game to have the pay-per-play business model [which works for older gamers].

**NG: How much are you still directly involved with game development?**

**HO:** We all have our own producers, and that producer will just listen to what the teams say, and help in the process. I really want to get involved myself, so that's why I'm producing my own game on the side, the network game I mentioned.

**NG: Which next-gen platform do you find intriguing?**

**HO:** My programmers are enthusiastic about GameCube. Maybe GameCube wouldn't be a good fit for *Crazy Taxi 2* because of Nintendo's target audience, but I really want to go into the business of making games for children.

**NG: Why haven't you created kids games in the past?**

**HO:** Our developers have only done games that they themselves want to play—games that we consider cool—but it would be nice if they could develop games like *Pokémon*.

ability to converse with a hybrid man-fish and test their skills with a pair of maracas. Although Sega is moving forward with a focused eye on sales projections, the plan is to carry on the crusade with original titles. In fact, Sega developers in Japan are already exploring the potential for the hard drive that ships with Xbox. "We have teams that are salvaging over the ability to store data, to increase a game's levels and look at concepts like massively multi-player games," Moore says.

### Placing Bets

With a newfound freedom stretching beyond the bounds of the console manufacturing space, Sega is wisely taking the same cautious approach to the market shared by many third-party publishers—planning initial development for all three next-generation consoles, and then waiting for the holiday dust to settle before reevaluating its plans. Moore says he sees the potential for all three consoles to coexist, which would expand the market for his company's games. The key rests in whether the companies



■ Although keeping an eye on the financial bottom line, Sega still hopes to lead innovation with games such as *Seaman*

can differentiate themselves in the minds of gamers. Xbox will launch with a built-in hard drive, giving it the power to offer new gaming experiences, possibly coupling with a broadband network to deliver the massively multiplayer role-playing games that have been thus far exclusive to PC gamers. Sony counters this advantage with a huge installed base that should be in place going into the holiday season, but is essentially targeting the same consumer. Nintendo will, in all likelihood, attract younger gamers with games such as the expected *Mario* and *Star Wars* launch titles.

"We're going back into the same battle that was raging back when I got here two years ago," concludes Moore. "Only two consoles can survive. It's déjà vu. If you look at all three companies, I don't see failure in the cards for any of them. For three companies that have strong consumer brands, balance sheets, and war chests to go at it, they're as good as you're going to find in any industry. We're looking forward to what happens this holiday, so the shoe's on the other foot now."

Despite the potential for three successful platforms, Sega is wary of Murphy's Law in the videogame industry. "The first two months I was here, I kept hearing about something called Dolphin, and that seems like a lifetime ago and it still hasn't shipped," says Moore with a laugh. "If you look at what

**RILKYA NAKAGAWA**  
president,  
Wow Entertainment



Wow Entertainment has run the gamut of game development, creating such diverse titles as *House of the Dead*, *Sega Bass Fishing*, and *World Series Baseball 2K1*. President Rilky Nakagawa has the longest tenure at Sega (along with Yu Suzuki), and has seen just about everything during his 13 years with the company.

**Next Gen: Where do you find inspiration for your games?**

**Rilky Nakagawa:** The ideas come from all sorts of places. When I'm developing a game for children, I look at children's books for inspiration, but I try not to do too much planning—I'm inspired as I work. We actually raised a bass because I knew that programmers had to have a hands-on experience with the fish in order to reproduce it for *Bass Fishing*.

**NG: What are you working on?**

**RN:** We're working on an updated version of *Bass Fishing* for the home, and our programmers went to the U.S. to study fishing habits of Americans because we're targeting the U.S. consumer. We're also working on an arcade baseball game, a golf game, and a motorcycle game that's almost finished called *Wild Rider*. There's also a title called *Sports Jam* that's a mixture of popular games like *Football* and *Soccer*—just the highlight moments, like the home run derby of baseball.

**NG: Sports games are sure to do well, but what's the deal with your dog-walking game?**

**RN:** I was thinking of a game where people all around the world can get together with their dog, and just walk around this special world. It would enable gamers to either make friends with each other or compete, whichever they want. That's what people want—they aren't looking for competitors and points that you get from games.

## TOYOSHIO NAGOSH

President, Amusement Vision

Ouytano USA is the only console game developed by Amusement Vision, with its other previous projects restricted for the arcades. The team has, however, indicated that a multi-platform strategy is in the works, and that it is interested in the potential for networked games between a home console and a coin-op.

**Next Gen:** What did you learn from developing Ouytano USA, your first networked console game?

TN: Network game development has changed a lot over the years, but it wasn't as difficult as we anticipated. Moving forward, one of the most important factors will be to promote consumers to use the online features of our games.

**NG:** How can you make your games better for the home player?

TN: Gamers play console games much longer than they play arcade games, so we will work to make our console titles more immersive. Console games need to keep the player entertained for longer than three minutes at a time.

**NG:** What's your strongest competitive advantage?

Toyoshio Nagoshi: Sega has its own arcade [the Japan], enabling us to build on our arcade strengths for our platform games.



Microsoft, Sony, and Nintendo have to do this year, a lot can go wrong. We just have to predict Murphy's arrival."

## A New Beginning

It's easy to sit down with Peter Moore and be optimistic about his company's future. Sega has some of the strongest internal development teams in the industry. Pioneers with names like Naka, Nagoshi, and Thomas, have blazed a trail in online console gaming that will (eventually) be leveraged on PlayStation 2, Xbox, and GameCUBE. Without question, the company has become a contender for the title of top third-party publisher and has finally shed its underdog status as console manufacturer. Sega's support of Xbox, PlayStation 2 and GameCUBE will only increase each system's chance of survival in the coming war.

Does Moore have any final words of wisdom to impart to

those who continue to wage their wars in the console hardware space? You bet.

"I take pride that throughout the lifespan of Dreamcast, we've been incredibly open about our plans [with third-party publishers and retailers]," he says. "I hope other platform holders grasp that openness, because it's important that they realize that what they do has implications for a lot of other people."

— Kevin Toyomo, with Japanese interviews by Steven Kent



**"We have teams that are salivating over the ability to store data."**

— Peter Moore on the Xbox hard drive

## NORIYOSHI OBA

president, Sega Overworks



Back in September 2000, Microsoft released a list of 50 Xbox developers, including a company named "Over Work's Inc.," sparking rumors that Sega was developing games for another platform. "In, the firm names are different, but nobody had heard of Over Work's Inc. After making rounds on the Internet, the speculation was squashed on the grounds that Sega's internal development teams were too valuable for Sega to make a game on a competitor's console. Nine months and one new Sega strategy later, that theory doesn't sound so far-fetched.

Despite a focused attempt to impress Japanese gamers at Tokyo Game Show, Microsoft didn't exactly shut the critics up. Coincidentally, Over Work's Inc. — or, Sega Overworks — has its strengths firmly planted in the Japanese markets. Skies of Arcadio was critically acclaimed in the U.S., but the Japanese Solsara Toban series is its bread and butter.

Another asset that Noriyoshi Oba's company can offer Microsoft is its experience with Gungu Gungu Otsen, a collection of online party-night games that attracted 1.5 million Japanese users. "Network party games" will be the second great strength of our company," Oba told Edge magazine, "as we want to develop and grow a true, built community. When people try an online experience, they are tempted to go back again and it can become almost a habit. On average, users were playing for around three hours each time, so there is a market."

## A DREAMCAST SURVIVOR'S GUIDE TO 2001

Sega provided this exclusive list of titles scheduled for Dreamcast this year.

### APRIL:

Exhibition of Speed  
Titus  
Giga Wing 2  
Capcom  
Half-Life  
Sierra  
Illbladed

### JUNE:

AAA USA, Ltd  
Mars Matrix  
Capcom  
PGA Tour Bowling 2  
Bethesda Softworks  
Project Justice  
Capcom  
Smash Invaders  
Ubisoft

### MAY:

Dragon Riders  
Chronicles of Pern  
Ubisoft  
Soldier of Fortune  
Crown  
Spider-Man  
Activision  
Warrior World Party  
Titus

### JULY:

Heavy Metal  
Capcom  
Real Fishing Wild  
Natsume  
Sega Sports World  
Series Baseball 2K2  
Sega  
Sonic Adventure 2  
Sega

### AUGUST:

Allen Front Online  
Sega  
Propeller Arena  
Sega  
Sega Sports NCAA  
Sega

### SEPTEMBER:

Bombberman Online  
Sega  
Commandos 2  
Eidos  
Evil Twin: Opiem's  
Chronicles  
Ubisoft  
Sega Sports NFL2K2  
Sega

### OCTOBER:

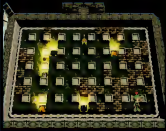
Sega Sports NBA2K2  
Sega

### NOVEMBER:

Sega Sports Tennis  
2K2  
Sega  
Shenmue 2  
Sega  
The Sims & Ever 2  
Sega

### DECEMBER:

Sega Sports NHL2K2  
Sega



■ (Clockwise from top left) Mars Matrix, Shenmue 2, Allen Front Online, and Bombberman Online are just a few of the titles that are still on tap for Dreamcast owners, with more expected to be announced at E3

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# → Finals

At Next Gen we often feel like living gods, but it only takes one great game to make us feel truly humble

## PlayStation 2

Zone of the Enders	76
4x4 Evolution	81
Army Men: Air Attack 2	81
Army Men: Green Rogue	81
Quake III	82
Bloody Roar 3	82
NBA Hoopz	82
Unison	85
Rumble Racing	85
Warriors of Might and Magic	85

■ With a little positive reinforcement, you too can turn your little darling into a real monster



■ Much of the early part of the game is spent training your creature to do the things you want it to



■ Black & White uses an ingenious picture system where players use their mouse to select which miracles they want to cast

■ PC

# Black & White

■ Publisher: Electronic Arts ■ Developer: Lionhead Studios

Good things, and sometimes great things, come to those who wait

■ Train your creature alone and it might choose to just kill you.



■ Like one of those artsy films the Europeans are always coming up with, Black & White doesn't so much entertain you as impress the hell out of you. Perhaps, say 20 years from now, when videogames have

firmly established themselves as a legitimate art form, we'll be able to say with a straight face that Black & White was a brilliant work of Romantic Pantheism. But for now, we'll just say that it kicks much ass.

For those one or two gamers who still don't know, B&W is the brainchild of Peter Molyneux, designer of games like Populous and Dungeon Keeper. In development for more than three years, the game could crudely be described as a cross between Populous and a Tamagotchi, with a little barnyard Street Fighter thrown in for good measure.



78

**→ Dreamcast**

Unreal Tournament	86
Charge 'n Blast	86
Worms World Party	86



88

**→ PlayStation**

Disney's Aladdin in Nasir's Revenge	87
Strikers 1945	87
Toy Story Racer	87
Triple Play Baseball	87


**→ PC**

Black & White	76
Serious Sam	88
Adventure Pinball: Forgotten Island	88
Blade of Darkness	88
Mindrover: The Europa Project	91
In Cold Blood	91
Star Trek Away Team	91
Star Wars: Battle for Naboo	91

**The Rating System**

Since we're living in a time when even average games are pretty good, we at Next Generation will continue to demand even better. Note that a three-star rating is a typical "good" game, so expect to see a lot of them.

★★★★★	REVOLUTIONARY EXCELLENT
★★★★☆	GOOD
★★★☆☆	FAIR
★★☆☆☆	BAD

 Denotes a review of a Japanese product



■ Your sphere of influence is indicated by a colored walk, which limits your powers in other parts of the world.

Players take on the role of Molyneux's favorite protagonist: the all-powerful god. In the Story mode, you must amass influence among the inhabitants of the land of Eden, with the goal of knocking the other gods out of the deity business. Like Populous, you fight for the hearts of the little people by the use of

miracles, proper town management, and B&W's real claim to fame, the creatures.

The creatures set this title apart from anything that's been done before. At the start of the campaign, you choose between anthropomorphic versions of a cow, an ape, or a tiger to raise as your own. Thanks to the game's astonishing AI, the creature can be trained to be a saintly guardian, a malicious devourer, or something in between. You act as a virtual parent, disciplining and rewarding it to shape its character.

The appeal of B&W is as undeniable as it is obvious: Everybody wants to rule the world. The game centers in on the core of our ego and offers us the ability to be holy or unholy, deity to thousands of little followers —



Keep your hand over the Creature to find out what he's thinking.

■ Kicking the crap out of an enemy's creature is a good way to impress the locals

and one great big creature. A creature's early stages of existence are often filled with exasperation as you teach it how to behave, the right and wrong things to eat, and the right miracles to cast.

But as they grow and develop fixed personalities, it is a surprising thrill to see them behave exactly the way you'd want them to. In one game our kindy

tiger would wade into an opposing village and begin to change hearts by watering the fields. In another, our vicious, carnivorous chimp would stomp into town and introduce himself by eating a villager, destroying his home, and then crapping on the ruins. What fun!

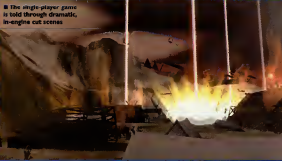
But anyone who thinks that B&W is just a souped-up version of a Tamagotchi will be more

**UH, LORD, YOU'VE GOT MAIL**

If you are using a POP3 compatible email program such as MS Outlook, Block & White can actually name your villagers according the names in your contact list. And if you receive an email while you are playing the game, the namesake villager will inform that you've gotten mail from that person.



■ Want to know how old your population is, or if any of the women are pregnant? Just call up the villager statistics



■ The single-player game is told through dramatic, in-engine cut scenes



■ You can micromanage right down to just how randy your population is

than a bit surprised by its complex and rather deep resource management. This is not the kind of game for gods who don't like to micromanage. Because you can only be effective within your sphere of influence, it is absolutely vital that you keep a vibrant population believing deeply in you.

That isn't easy, though, and early on you'll be occasionally frustrated by important things not covered in the barely adequate manual. For example, you have to constantly create "disciples," special villagers to whom you assign important tasks like woodcutting. Once several villages are within your control, it becomes a frantic game of catch-up just to keep what you have

going smoothly, much less acquire new territory.

Interestingly enough, as much as we tried we could find no real benefit in being either saintly or sinister. Both good and evil have their unique set of difficulties as a god, and Lionhead deserves credit for an amazing job of balancing these two possibilities. Throughout the single-player game, you come across gold scrolls that advance the story and more than 400 silver challenge scrolls, many of which involve perfectly balanced choices between doing the right thing, or doing the fun thing.

And as you establish your alignment, the world of Eden begins to reflect your decisions. As creatures grow older and

## IFEEL YOU

**Block & White** is one of the first games to support Immersion's TouchSense technology (found in Logitech's Feel mouse, for example), which enables force-feedback in the mouse to rumble and buzz with game effects. It may sound like a gimmick, but once you get used to the feeling of trees snapping when you uproot them or the creatures purring when you pet them, it actually adds quite a bit.

larger, their physical appearance reflects their character. Noble lions stride confidently with a golden glow, while corrupt leopards slink around the land with a mangy coat and wicked claws. Your temple, spells, and the weather all change to reflect the kind of god you are. Even your onscreen hand (the only nod to artifice in the brilliant interface) will glow red and blistered for evildoers.

But perhaps the game's best feature is that once you've clearly established your alignment and your creature has developed its own personality, you can go online to battle against other armchair deities across the world. The game supports several different modes for both Internet and LAN play, including a Quick Sidematch mode. Every creature's attributes will be apparent online, right down to the custom tattoos you can make for it.

It is that kind of extraordinary attention to detail that makes *B&W* the sort of big-budget, high-concept title that was worth waiting for. The eight different

tribes, based on real cultures such as the Aztecs, Egyptians, and Japanese, all have their own unique music and dances. The day and night cycles follow a realistic routine, with fireflies dancing around at night and cocks crowing at daybreak.

Frankly, it's all too easy to get wrapped up in this little world growing inside your PC. In one instance, we lost track of our creature and hit the hotkey that zooms right to him — only to find him on the seashore, lying on his side, watching the sunset as seagulls drifted above him. It is precisely that sort of beautiful little moment that is so rarely captured in videogames.

With its amazing graphics and physics, superb AI, excellent sound, and ingenious interface, *B&W* is a completely absorbing experience. While most games continue to slumber in a moral adolescence where the consequences of actions are routinely ignored, our slowly maturing industry could use more thoughtful and engrossing titles like this.

— Jim Preston

**NextGen** ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** If you don't own a PC, this is reason enough to get one.



■ Good clothes spectacularly with evil on a regular basis, but the game itself takes no sides



■ During combat, certain gestures will cause your creature to perform a super-move



■ At the beginning of the game, there are three distinct creatures to choose from

**"...AN ABSOLUTE TRIUMPH - IT'S VERY LIKELY THE BEST PURE RACING GAME AVAILABLE ON DREAMCAST."**

- Official Dreamcast Magazine



**"... IT MAY BE THE BEST REPRODUCTION OF THE ACTUAL FEEL OF MARATHON RACING EVER."**

- NextGen



DAILY RADAR



**"TEST DRIVE LE MANS IS FLAT-OUT ONE OF THE BEST RACERS EVER FOR DREAMCAST -- OR ANY OTHER SYSTEM FOR THAT MATTER."**

- Daily Radar





# TEST DRIVE LE MANS

**"NO RACING GAME CURRENTLY AVAILABLE FOR DREAMCAST OR PS2 COMES CLOSE."**

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**COMING SOON TO THE PLAYSTATION 2 COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM**



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■ Waste your opposition in close-range attacks to minimize damage to the surroundings

■ PLAYSTATION 2

# Zone of the Enders

■ Publisher: Konami ■ Developer: Konami

## Konami's next step in action games

→ Without a doubt, ZOE is a graphical achievement that few other PS2 games can match, and under the glossy surface old-school gamers will find a shooter that captures the intensity and addiction found in Konami's classics. The core aspect of the gameplay consists of using your specially designed mech to destroy hordes of enemy mechs bent on the destruction of your moon. Fortunately, the fighting system offers plenty of depth and variety, making the battles thoroughly engrossing.

You fight either in hand-to-hand melees or from a distance, and each type of fighting offers its own advantages. However,

fighting from afar with projectile attacks often results in damage to the city and loss of civilian life, and since you're required to minimize collateral destruction, it forces you to resort to other ways of dealing with the opposition. This variation on the typical shooter formula, which usually



■ Mech combat has never been so fast and furious

requires players simply to destroy everything, elevates this game to a more strategic and interesting plane.

Although ZOE is an action game, it does borrow some

elements from RPGs. As in an RPG, you move around within the world via an overhead map.

Once you've chosen a location, the mech descends into the area and the perspective changes to third-person. From here, squads of enemies are visible flying



**A MATTER OF CONTROL**

ZOE's other highlights include its fluid control and intuitive interface. In fact, players may become so comfortable with the controls they forget they're using a PlayStation 2 pad. The action is also a spectacular. The sword-clashing, dodging, and combination attacks are so stunning that it's almost like watching an episode of your favorite mech online.

around. You don't, however, actually have to battle any squads until you engage them, and this RPG style of confrontation actually enhances the strategic element. For example, if the squads are spread out, each destroying a different part of the environment, you may need to herd them together before the fighting begins to prevent excessive damage to the city.

With eight to 10 hours of gameplay, ZOE's running time is admittedly brief (although still far better than *The Bouncer's* paltry hour and 30 minutes). But you'll probably want to need to play through this two or three times in order to unlock all the hidden characters or the Versus mode,

or receive A rankings for every rescue mission.

Despite all ZOE's excellent qualities, it does suffer from a few significant problems. First among these is that there are only four different types of enemies, plus the four bosses. Although they become progressively more difficult as you proceed, their attacks essentially remain the same. Also, while the additional weapons available to you are numerous, they lack the

variety and depth of many other action games. As a result, ZOE can get repetitive, especially in later levels.

The story isn't that interesting either. While it isn't outright bad, there's a serious lack of development. The beginning and end are elaborately and dramatically

conveyed by beautiful CG sequences, but for the time in between, there's little narration at all, which is pretty unsatisfying.

In the end, though, none of ZOE's faults can really detract from the overall experience too much. Everything else is simply that good. — Chester Barber

**E**NextGen★★★★☆

**Bottom Line:** This is a great action game that any gamer will surely enjoy, despite its faults. Unless you simply hate anything with mechs, this is one game you shouldn't miss.



■ The game offers numerous alternative weapons, which can unleash some pretty nifty special effects.

# Controls everything but your blood pressure



Enter the newest nonstop heart-pounding gaming frenzy, the Nostramo n45 from Belkin, the way in, the way to win, the mega-fast ultra-domination blood-pumping danger controller-evader that with enter - esc - mouse buttons flips you instantly into navigating Windows and drives the mouse cursor from the directional pad, n45 with its 13 programmable buttons, 70 (!) programmable functions, dual analog sticks and USB compatibility, you'll know exactly what you'll do next and be stunned when you do it, the



Nostramo n45 GamePad—and the entire line of precision gaming tools from Belkin—gets you in control and breathless



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## 4x4 Evolution

Platform: **PlayStation 2**

Publisher: **Gathering of Developers** Developer: **Terminal Reality**

This freewheelin' off-road racer has already made the rounds on a number of platforms, and it shows. It's a halfway decent game, but we get the feeling that it's just been ported to PS2 to squeeze some extra life out of it. This is standard stuff: Purchase a car and set off to earn cash and the glory of being an off-road champ.

Several problems pop up, though. First, collision detection is somewhat haphazard; trees, fences, and the occasional freight train don't always have a consistent effect on your vehicle. Throw in some curious balancing issues, such as unusually ruthless competition and a questionable "relocating" feature, and this quickly becomes as frustrating as spinning your tires in the mud. It's a shame, because the game is pretty handsome — not the crispest models or the farthest horizon line we've ever seen, but more than competent.

**NextGen** ★★☆☆☆

**Bottom Line:** A competent racer with lots of options but a few too many significant flaws.

## Army Men: Green Rogue

Platform: **PlayStation 2** Publisher: **3DO** Developer: **3DO**

3DO's little green men march on... Green Rogue starts off simply, mixing bits of classic gameplay from *Robotron* to *Iron Warriors* with a dash of that terrible movie *Solo* thrown in. It almost works.

Players can go it alone or with a cohort, and from the word "go" the action never really ceases.

Movement is controlled with the left stick, while the right aims and fires. The screen is always scrolling, so the emphasis is on the action. This is an obvious nod to old-school, forward-scrolling shooters like *Space Harrier*, and as you might expect, things stay pretty simple. Your character can only carry one of four color-coded weapon types, including a flame thrower and a bazooka, though naturally each can be upgraded, while bio strikes (think smart bombs) are included to help even



**4x4 Evolution was never a great game. Now, stripped of its online mode, it's not even good.**

The real problem, however, is the lack of any sense of speed. Races run smoothly enough, but are clambering up a shallow hill. As a result, this rarely approaches anything like a thrilling pace. Previous versions had many of the same troubles, but the online multiplayer options boosted the overall package by a point or so, especially with the Dreamcast version. Sadly, without it, the flaws show all too clearly. — David Chen

Like that last awkward kid picked for kickball, the *Army Men* series never really gets anyone's hopes up. So it's awfully refreshing to play a fun and imaginative entry in 3DO's seemingly endless series of little plastic soldiers.

**NextGen** ★★☆☆☆

**Bottom Line:** A competent racer with lots of options but a few too many significant flaws.



**What you see here is a 3D forward-scrolling shooter — yes, we were as surprised as you may be that such a thing even existed**

out the desperate odds. Played with a partner the game reminds us of the old days, debating whether to swipe all the power-ups for yourself or share 'em.

It's not bad, but ultimately it's too shallow to hold your interest for long, and that just about sums up the visuals too. We can't say we really hate the game — it's mostly enjoyable in a brand-new kind of way — but it's not terribly memorable either. — David Chen

**NextGen** ★★☆☆☆

**Bottom Line:** It's a harmless enough diversion, but there are better ways to spend your time.

PLAYSTATION 2

PLAYSTATION 2 **Finals**

## Army Men: Air Attack 2

Publisher: **3DO** Developer: **3DO**

### At least one batch of green guys can fly high



Like that last awkward kid picked for kickball, the *Army Men* series never really gets anyone's hopes up. So it's awfully refreshing to play a fun and imaginative entry in 3DO's seemingly endless series of little plastic soldiers.

*Army Men: Air Attack 2* is a sequel that doesn't so much expand upon the original as simply crank up the framerate and polygon count. Thanks to PS2 power, AA2 features much better models, realtime shadows, and zero slowdown.

Once again, you take to the skies as Captain Blade, a tiny green helicopter pilot who must battle the beige forces of evil. Controlling the five different helicopters through the two dozen levels is easy enough with the analog stick and



**Plastic men have odd ideas about military hardware**

**Air Attack is the one Army Men subseries you can count on for some decent backyard fun**



shoulder buttons, and taking out the bad guys with the usual arsenal of rockets, guns, napalm, and kamikaze paratroopers is fast and fun.

Most of the single-player challenges are a snap right up until the end, but for replay value, gamers can play cooperatively with a split screen, or battle

friends in five different multiplayer modes. There is also, of course, the usual assortment of hidden vehicles that have to be discovered in the campaign. But the real strength of *Air Attack 2* is its charming re-creation of the timeless joy of senselessly destroying your toys. — Jim Preston

**NextGen** ★★☆☆☆

**Bottom Line:** It's the best-looking *Army Men* game ever made, and it's actually pretty fun too. We're as surprised as you are.

It's fast-paced, gorgeous, and brutal — everything QIII should be



PLAYSTATION 2

# Quake III: Revolution

Publisher: EA Games ■ Developer: Bullfrog

The Revolution will not be keyboard/mouse-compatible...

→ Quake III: Revolution doesn't just look good for a PS2 game; it's visually breathtaking by any console standards. Those used to running QIII on PC with most of the details turned off for speed's sake will delight at the amazing visual depth Bullfrog has packed into the PS2 version.

All of your favorite levels have undergone subtle makeovers, adding some

new details to the already intense environments and changing the placement of some power-ups and weaponry. The chalcun and the railgun are back in all their ammo-splitting glory, while there are two new power-ups (Invulnerability and kamikaze) and even a few new maps. Another addition is that your character can now be developed, enabling you to bulk up your warrior's abilities as he progresses.

But two pretty important weaknesses here can't be overlooked: the lack of keyboard/mouse support, and the complete inability to play online. Using a controller to play an FPS will

probably never be as intuitive as a keyboard and mouse. The "Dextrous" control setting, however, at least enables you to get the most out of the controller, and it gets easier with practice. The game also compensates by adding a subtle auto-aim, which manages to render some assistance without watering down the experience. Not being able to play online is a more serious drawback, but the multitap enables the game to be played on a four-way split screen with little to no slowdown.

All in all, this is a fast and beautiful game — easily the best shooter available for PS2. — Garrett Konyon

**NextGen** ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** Buy this game or spend a lifetime regretting it.

Few things are more satisfying than a close-in frog — score yours today!

## Bloody Roar 3

Platform: PlayStation 2 ■ Publisher: Hudson ■ Developer: Eighting

While Tekken 4, Soul Collar 2, and Virtua Fighter 4 should all appear on PS2 within the next 18 months, players looking for a solid 3D fighter today will find few contenders beyond Tekken Tag Tournament and DQAI: Hotcore Enter Bloody Roar 3, the latest in Hudson's lycanthropic fighting series — and a solid, if not groundbreaking, fighting experience.

Gameplay closely resembles a less-tuned Virtua Fighter with no dodge and lots of juggling. What makes it unique is each character's ability to morph into a super-powered animal wire-warrior. Unfortunately Hudson made little attempt to take the game to the next level, so while there's plenty of action, you've seen most of it before. There are only 12 combatants — an awfully small number next to TTT's vast roster — and the human/beast transformations take



As with all previous Bloody Roar titles, the human forms are sorta dull, but the beast forms kick ass

the place of any tag team combat. In fact, the Custom Game mode from earlier entries in the series has been dropped, replaced by a useful but unfulfilling Fracore mode and nine different skill settings. The arenas have their moments, but most are forgettable and lack the lush graphic detail of those in TTT.

Despite these problems, BR3 remains a fun game. The fighters have widely varying styles, and the beast forms look simply spectacular. Worth a look. — Eric Brecht

**NextGen** ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** Hunting for the next king of the jungle in 3D fighters? You won't want to mount this one's head on your wall, but it'll keep you warm and well fed until your next big game hunt.

## NBA Hoopz

Platform: PlayStation 2 ■ Publisher: Midway  
 Developer: Eurocom Entertainment Software

In the beginning there was NBA Jam, and it was good. The 2-on-2, over-the-top basketball was a major hit in its heyday, spawning many clones from its own publisher; Midway There was NFL Blitz and Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey, then Jam itself morphed into the NBA Showtime series. Gussied up in 3D clothing, the franchise now goes by the name of NBA Hoopz; and despite the addition of another player on the court, it's the same, now-wear formula we've been getting since the early 1990s.

Other than its ancient gameplay the other big problem with Hoopz is its graphical sloppiness. You would think that a game that emphasizes dunks would do everything possible to make them look spectacular. Instead we get the same old animations we've seen dozens of times before. At



One of the last things the world really needed was a lackluster NBA Jam hack like Hoopz

the way least, every dunk should show the ball going through the basket correctly instead of the player pushing the ball through the front of the rim, but that's just not the case.

Hoopz remains fun, especially with a few friends around to trash-talk with, but the same good time could be had with a SNES and a copy of the original Jam. The move to 3D doesn't make things significantly better. — Rob Smoko

**NextGen** ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** Sloppy dunk animations and a blatant lack of originality draws a technical foul on NBA Hoopz.



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## Rumble Racing

Platform: PlayStation 2 Publisher: Konami Developer: KGET

Rumble Racing is an under-typed arcade sports game with a lot of style. There are stunts to be performed around nearly every corner; the levels are huge and varied with shortcuts everywhere, and it's all very attractive.

There's a huge selection of cars and tracks. Each car has basic attributes (acceleration, stunt ability, and handling), and some cars are better on certain tracks than others. Game modes include Single Race, Stunt, and Championship. In Championship mode, you compete in three successive races for a trophy, advancing to the next cup challenge and unlocking new tracks and cars.

The game does have some problems. After a while, you're pretty much forced to find and utilize every shortcut in order to win, playing each track over and over until it's perfected. Of course, it's possible to ram the other



It's visually pretty cool and plays quite well, but Rumble Racing is a little demanding for an arcade-style racer

vehicles into obstacles, but at the higher levels, the CPU drivers rarely if ever make a wrong turn.

You can also collect power-ups that are similar to those in kart racing games — of slicks, bombs, shoesaves, and so on. The levels look and play well, maintaining a rock-solid framerate and a nice sense of speed. The difficulty level ramps up a little too high for most players to enjoy, though, and having to use every shortcut can be even the best virtual driver. — Kevin Rice

NextGen ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** This is a pretty, fun arcade racer with hours of replayability. But the memorization required of players and level of difficulty can be a turn-off.

## Warriors of Might and Magic

Platform: PlayStation 2 Publisher: 3DO

Developer: New World Computing

After the pain of Crusaders of Might and Magic, loading up this latest M&M action RPG required a leap of faith. Unfortunately, that faith has been ill-rewarded. While perhaps worth a look, Warriors' faults are many and obvious.

You control the game through a third-person, Tomb Raider-esque view with a completely mobile camera. New World has done a decent job optimizing every controller button, so everything from changing and using items to casting spells and initiating an attack can be done with relative ease.

Everything else falls way short. It's better-looking than Crusaders, but the dark textures and jumpiness of the characters' movement still leave a lot to be desired. While many of the enemies look good (if



The environments aren't great-looking, and there's really little else to recommend in this hack-and-slash RPG

only while standing still, the control isn't exactly responsive, and most of the time you're left spinning the camera in raw frustration trying to deal with the pesky critters.

The action is pretty non-stop, and the RPG elements blend in well with the fighting, but that can't make up for everything else that's wrong here. — Norman Chad

NextGen ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** Neither pretty nor especially fluid to control, Warriors isn't the step up from the awful Crusaders we'd hoped for.

PLAYSTATION 2

# Unison

Platform: PlayStation 2 Publisher: Tecmo Developer: Tecmo

Look Ma, no feet!



Dance for Frooooooo! OK, it's not quite that melodramatic, but Unison sure packs a funky backstory behind its rhythm-action gameplay.

Tecmo's Unison is a rhythm-based game in which you control one of three different dancers — each representing a difficulty level — by using the analog sticks on the PlayStation controller. That's it. But much like PaRappa the Rapper, what Unison lacks in substance it more than makes up for in style.

Instead of the "button scroll" that's common in rhythm games, you're given a pair of circles, each representing a stick. Within each circle, a smaller circle moves around showing where to push the analog sticks in time to the music. It's fast-paced and gorgeous with music that's close to perfect — who knows they could make "OM.C.A." even more disco-ey!

The story is also a plus. In Twin Ships, dancing has been outlawed, so you form the revolutionary dance group Unison. Master the increasingly difficult dance routines and you'll win over the populace. It's as weird



as it sounds and full of humor that's geared toward adults, despite the cartoonish presentation.

Graphically, Unison is full of PS2 effects like mirrors and motion blur. It's all rather psychedelic, with colorful graphics and TV-style presentation. However, there is one shortcoming. In that all the dance numbers require little more than flat-out memorization. While this is typical of the rhythm-

action genre, it means that the game can be beaten in a day. Also, many of the early routines aren't terribly amazing to watch, though they do get much better.

But for those who appreciate a great rhythm game, it's both an aural and visual pleasure. The music is catchy, and the control is original and dead-on. In the end, you just won't be able to wipe that goofy grin off your face. — Kevin Rice

NextGen ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** It's not the same leap that PaRappa was, but it's a great rhythm game with beautiful graphics, excellent music, and creative controls. Recommended.



It may not run at 60fps, but at least it runs at a solid 30

■ DREAMCAST

# Unreal Tournament

■ Publisher: **Infogrames** ■ Developer: **Secret Level**

**Unreal as it was meant to be played**

→ Although UT's late arrival on Dreamcast has enabled Quake III to set the FPS standard, the final product more than compensates for its tardiness thanks to its online playability. Unlike most of QIII's servers, which suffer from horrible ping times, UT seems to offer plenty of servers running reasonably fast, even with the 56K modem. This means that console gamers can enjoy

UT as the designers meant it to be played — of course, that assumes there are folks online to play against.

Although UT lacks a serious single-player mode, the bots in the multiplayer games are more than formidable; they'll do things you'd think that only human players could. Tricks like spew killing, dodging bullets, and flanking are commonplace. It may not provide quite the satisfaction of a live opponent, but the AI is excellent.

Gameplay-wise, UT is as deep as, if not deeper than,

any FPS available. The weapons are well balanced, and silly moves like the dash jump add flair and strategy. The level designs are all very well thought-out, and Infogrames has created a few original maps specifically for consoles.

Which doesn't mean UT Dreamcast is perfect. Most distressing, the Dreamcast controller is rather imprecise and cumbersome, and the mouse and keyboard control, while decent, lacks the snap of the PC version.

Still, the problems don't hinder the overall experience much. If you're looking for a solid multiplayer FPS with online capability this is the one. — Chester Borber

NextGen ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** Unreal Tournament is one of the best multiplayer first-person shooters ever made. Although the transition from PC to Dreamcast has encountered a few problems, they don't hurt the overall gameplay.



There's a huge variety of weapons in UT, making it a very deep game

## Charge 'n Blast

■ Platform: **Dreamcast** ■ Publisher: **Xsist** ■ Developer: **Sims**

Well, this came out of nowhere. Charge 'n Blast is nothing less than a 3D update to those single-screen shooters of yesteryear like Cobal — you know, the sort where your character runs back and forth in the foreground along the bottom of the screen, shooting at enemies and objects in the background while dodging fire. The results are certainly action-packed, and the graphics are nothing short of excellent. In a braindead kind of way, this could be a fun game to spend a rainy afternoon churning through.

This isn't to say there aren't a couple of major problems with the control. You move back and forth using the shoulder buttons, while aiming with the analog stick. As you might imagine, this is not an especially intuitive layout, and the situation is made worse by the general imprecision and sluggishness of the aiming reticle. Worse, there's no way to change the default setup at



It's not often that a game can look this good and control this poorly, but Charge 'n Blast manages this rare feat

all, not even to reverse the up-down axis of the stick — so you could push down to move the aim upwards, as in a flight sim or first-person shooter — the way most of us are used to doing it.

That's a bit of a shame, because Charge 'n Blast really does look terrific, and the pace is pretty blistering. If only you could control things well enough to be able to put up a decent fight, this would probably be a blast. As it is, it's just rather frustrating. — Jeff Lundgren

NextGen ★★☆☆☆

**Bottom Line:** If you've got a lot of patience or super-human hand-eye coordination, by all means give it a try. Otherwise, this wears thin quickly.

## Worms World Party

■ Platform: **Dreamcast**

■ Publisher: **Titus Software** ■ Developer: **Team 17**

Worms has been a favorite of strategy gamers for years, and deservedly so. Not since Scorched Earth has there been a game that holds more appeal when it comes to carefully lining up a shot and lowering the boom on rival units.

This Dreamcast version looks and plays just like its PC counterpart. Players each take control of a team of cute little worms, then take turns choosing from an arsenal designed to annihilate the opposing team of arms-toting armids.

The Dreamcast version utilizes the controller well when it comes to choosing worms and weapons, and the game's training modes and variety of gameplay options assure tons of replay value. The control is a bit confusing when it comes to more advanced moves, such as setting the timing on grenades or swinging from ninja ropes, but after some practice it's easy enough.



Once again, worm warriors rears its streamlined head — strategy games rarely get better, or funner

The all-important online play is included, although we're a little bit disappointed in how it works. While it's a cinch to get up and running using Dreamcast's modem, the game doesn't support the broadband adapter. Also, you can use the Dreamcast keyboard while chatting before the start of a game, but during play you have no way to communicate with other players, which really dampens the trash-talking. — Mike Wolf

NextGen ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** Even with the online issues, this is Worms at its finest — quick, easy, fun worm-blasting action.

■ PLAYSTATION

# Disney's Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge

■ Publisher: SCEA ■ Developer: Argonaut

## Just a tiny bit of magic



■ Aladdin isn't terribly original, but it is well executed and offers some decent platform thrills

→ Sony's previous Disney title, *The Emperor's New Groove*, was a pleasant surprise with its easygoing platform action for younger gamers. *Nasira's Revenge* does it again, bringing a nice mix of child-friendly gameplay and finely tuned controls to a cute, colorful package.

The story is simple and straightforward: Nasira, sister to the banished bad guy Jafar, wants revenge and blackmails Aladdin into helping her collect the magic artifacts needed to bring back her brother. Naturally it's up to the player to help Aladdin, his sultan sidekick Abu, and the fair damsel in distress in their

efforts to outwit guards, collect coins, and run-and-jump to the final showdown.

Argonaut has managed to squeeze a lot of mileage out of the Croc 2 engine. The game's colors are rich, and the animation is smooth. With the movie(s) as source material, the art direction is also superb, and the game looks a lot like an actual Disney flick. The gameplay is the usual fare: fighting guards, jumping from platform to platform, and figuring out simple puzzles. But things are kept both diverse and interesting. Each of the characters utilizes a different gameplay mechanic, encouraging different tactics, and various mini-games round out each level.

In fact, given the relative level of challenge, this might appeal to a slightly older audience than expected, although it's still on the easy side, amounting to little more than a pleasant diversion. Still, it's actually sort of fun and far better than most of the kid's fare droling PlayStation lately. — David Chen



■ Everything moves along well, and it's fairly pretty to boot.

■ NextGen ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** A nicely made game — on the easy side, but perfect for kids.

# Strikers 1945

■ Platform: PlayStation ■ Publisher: Agetec ■ Developer: Paikyo

bullets, destroy enemies; collect power-ups. The formula is fairly basic, but anyone who can appreciate an intense, extremely chaotic shooter will have a good time. But the chaos also means that it's often impossible to escape without suffering many cheap deaths. Further, you can beat *Strikers* in just a couple of hours, and there's very little incentive to replay it. Anyone

looking for something more long-lasting should look elsewhere. — Chester Barber

You begin with a choice of six different types of fighter planes, each possessing its own unique attacks and attributes. Once the game begins, pre-PlayStation gamers will quickly become acclimated. Dodge an insane number of



■ *Strikers 1945* offers pretty basic shooter gameplay, but at least it's pretty intense

■ NextGen ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** *Strikers* is a decent shooter of a type that's all but dead. Unfortunately, it hasn't aged very well over the years, though if you're into old games, this would be worth a rental.

# Toy Story Racer

■ Platform: PlayStation ■ Publisher: Activision ■ Developer: Disney Interactive/Traveller's Tales

One thing the console market does not need is yet another licensed kart racing game. But here's one anyway: this time based on the *Toy Story* movies. This is practically a double whammy since there has yet to be a *Toy Story* game that's better than mediocre.

And *Racer* won't set the world on fire either: it could be argued there's nothing particularly wrong with this title. It has a good number of levels; the graphics engine is solid; it feels relatively speedy; and it's colorful and cartoonish enough to suit its subject. On the other

hand, there's also nothing here you haven't seen in a million other kart races.

In the single-player game you have to switch between different characters and their vehicles (although they all handle the same), switching between racing and combat levels. Most of the courses are fairly short, however, and they're not especially interesting or remotely challenging.

Clearly this is aimed at the



■ *Toy Story Racer* will be familiar to anyone who owns even one other kart racer

youngest gamers. More discomfiting consumers — say, over the age of 10 — will not be impressed. — Jeff Lundrigan

■ NextGen ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** Why would anyone want to play another kart racing game?

# Triple Play Baseball

■ Platform: PlayStation ■ Publisher: EA Sports ■ Developer: Tregarch

If you're looking for a prime example of a game that shows there's no steam left in PlayStation's kettle, *Triple Play Baseball* would be it. Except for a few minor features and a statistical update, this is roughly the same game we've been playing for the past three years.

Trying to compare this to actual baseball is like saying the WWF is a close facsimile of the Greco-Roman style found in the Olympics. However, at least the WWF can actually be entertaining. *Triple Play* has always been just plain dull, with its home-run-happy take on a sport that has so many more

appealing qualities if you were hoping for a change in design philosophy this year well, you should know better by now. In its defense, it remains one of the better-looking PlayStation games, and if going mono o mono with a few buddies is all you're after, you could do a lot worse. But if you already own TP 2001, there's little reason to shell out for this year's. Let's hope the move to newer consoles gives



■ This year's *Triple Play* is oddly a lot like last year's

us a baseball series that can be enjoyed by all, not just by those who only want to press a few buttons and ballyhoo hit some home runs. — Rob Smolko

■ NextGen ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** EA Sports dropped the year from the title, but little else has changed for this final version for the original PlayStation.



■ If you enjoy being attacked by hordes of vicious enemies (and who doesn't?) then this is the game for you.

■ PC

# Serious Sam

■ Publisher: **God Games** ■ Developer: **Croteam**

The best \$20 you can spend

→ Every developer has to start somewhere, and what began as a tech demo of Croteam's Serious engine quickly turned into a full-fledged game. Serious Sam is both reminiscent of the early Doom games yet fresh in its presentation, with emphasis on straight-up, single-player FPS action.

You control Sam "Serious" Stone, who, through a convoluted story-

line that makes no difference at all, is transported back to ancient Egypt to destroy an "Evil Thing." The game will test the mettle of even the most dedicated FPS fan, throwing hundreds of enemies onscreen at once, ranging from familiar variations of gunners and bombers to medics and other strange beasts (including the headless, bomb-toting kamikaze, whose shrill scream alone will whiten the knuckles).

The graphics are pure eye candy — we're not sure how they got so much happening at once without the framerate dying. You move seamlessly from indoor to outdoor environments, and the textures are incredible. Enemies move fluidly, while the sound gives them away

before they're visible, adding to the tension. Sam even grunts out one-liners a la Duke Nukem.

It's not perfect. While most levels are huge, the whole thing takes place in one locale — some variety would've been nice. Also, the sheer number of enemies is overwhelming, perhaps even unfair in particular; the end battle feels more like an endurance test than a game.

At \$20 though, this is the best "budgetware" we've played in ages. In addition to the single-player game, there's multiplayer death-match, a Cooperative mode, and even a level editor. Great graphics, music, action, and 20 to 30 hours of FPS-style goodness. Sign us up. — Kevin Rice

NextGen ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** Hmmmm, should you get *Deer Hunter XII Extreme Plus* for \$20, or *Serious Sam* for the same price? This is a no-brainer purchase for any FPS gamer.

## Adventure Pinball: Forgotten Island

■ Platform: **PC** ■ Publisher: **EA Game** ■ Developer: **Digital Extremes**

Well here's something you don't see every day: a pinball simulator that uses the Unreal Tournament engine. No, we didn't make that up. *Adventure Pinball* wants to be a lot more than just a pinball game, but while it offers something beyond the usual pinball gameplay it also just doesn't handle the basics of pinball gameplay very well.

The idea here is to use the flippers and ball to accomplish various "tasks" in a particular order, like using the ball to hit and score away a few sharks so a little cave-man can escape the island he's trapped on. Generally each new "table" is divided into several different areas, and half the game is in maneuvering the ball up a ramp or over a waterfall to get in position to accomplish the next goal.

All well and good, but the problem is that while each area is usually quite large and has a lot of stuff in and around it, very little of it has to do directly with gameplay. In



■ Few pinball tables are as terminally dull as those in *Adventure Pinball*

fact, most of the tables are, well, kinda big and boring, with only a small number of things to actually aim for. The problem is made even worse because the camera scrolls with the ball, which often leaves you unable to see where you're supposed to be aiming, or unable to gauge exactly how the speed ball is going to hit the flipper.

Add in other annoyances, like a lack of any way to customize the controls, or too many tables where the angles don't quite line up, and you've got a sure-fire recipe for pinball frustration. — Jeff Lundgren

NextGen ★★☆☆☆

**Bottom Line:** *Sonic Spinball* did this sort of thing much better — without resorting to high-tech 3D engines — over eight years ago.

## Blade of Darkness

■ Platform: **PC** ■ Publisher: **Codemasters** ■ Developer: **Rebel Act**

The Good Book teaches us that he who lives by the sword usually gets chopped up into little bloody gobbets by the sword as well. If further proof is needed, it comes in the form of *Blade of Darkness*, a slice 'n' dice action game from Spain's Rebel Act studios, suitably tagged with an M rating.

Although no one has yet perfected third-person melee games, this one comes as close as any with a generally reliable camera and a lock-on feature that centers your player on the enemy. Fighting against multiple opponents usually results in missing limbs and a long revisit to the loading screen, but once you've mastered the controls, *Blade of Darkness* can be wonderfully engaging.

The lighting and particle effects are superb, the levels are huge, and



■ Mindless and unapologetically violent but still fun, *Blade of Darkness* will doubtless appeal to the audience it's aiming for

the nigh gothic score contributes to one of the most atmospheric PC games in months. Some of the special attack moves are almost impossible to pull off reliably, and the player models for each of the four different heroes is a bit clunky. Yet the vast array of weapons, unique fighting styles, and copious flesh wounds make this a fun game to live, and die, by. — Jim Preston

NextGen ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** This is the kind of fun that only comes from kicking an orc's ass, once you've sliced it off.



■ The Serious engine sure does look nice



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■ PC

# Mindrover: The Europa Project

■ Publisher: CogniToy ■ Developer: CogniToy

## Planning made fun



■ You gotta love any game that makes you think, and in *Mindrover*, the best brain wins



→ With the creation of *Mindrover: The Europa Project*, CogniToys has added a glittering jewel to the *Robot Wars* genre. A 3D strategy and programming game, *Mindrover* challenges players to design and program robotic vehicles and compete in different scenarios such as races and combat.

After selecting a scenario type and then a vehicle, you equip the robot with components such as engines, radar and weapons, and then you connect them together in the wiring screen. The game uses a scripting language that should make sense even to those without programming skills, but the learning curve is steep and may frustrate the less patient.

Thankfully, the game includes a thorough in-game tutorial, a decent manual, and an extensive in-game help system to teach you about the components and how to program the robots. Once you're satisfied with your programming, you run the scenario and see if the robot is up to beating the competition. If not, it's back to the drawing board. The game offers various challenges with different levels of difficulty, including some available for download on the *Mindrover* web site.

The graphics are a bit dated, and the sound effects limited, but neither are so bad they detract from the overall appeal. Not even *Cornige Heart* was this good. — Corio Harter

■ **NextGen** ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** A truly amazing title for anyone looking for something unique and challenging.

# In Cold Blood

■ Platform: PC ■ Publisher: Dreamcatcher Interactive ■ Developer: Revolution Software

As an adventure title, *In Cold Blood* could have been a fun, fascinating story of intrigue as you attempt to unravel the mysteries surrounding British secret agent John Cord. Instead, the developers chose to include action elements that do nothing but provide a constant source of irritation.

The graphics are good, if not great. While the cut scenes are cinematic and nice to watch, the in-game backgrounds are static and dull. At least the voice acting is top-notch; oddly, this one of the best-acted games around.

This was originally for PlayStation in Europe, and while it supports a keyboard or gamepad, using a mouse isn't even an option. But since maneuvering John Cord around is awkward to start with, that's almost irrelevant, and shooting an enemy just involves hitting the fire button as rapidly as possible. The game can't decide between action or adventure, and by



■ In true adventure game fashion, a large mysterious gadget always means a puzzle to solve combining the two, it does neither well. — Corio Harter

■ **NextGen** ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** The worst thing about *In Cold Blood* is that the story is pretty interesting and you want to like it, but the rest is so bad you just can't.

# Star Trek Away Team

■ Platform: PC ■ Publisher: Activision ■ Developer: Reflexive

The *Star Trek* license used to be the kiss of death, but the last year has sure bucked the trend. Now *Activision* and *Reflexive* offer *Star Trek Away Team*, an innovative approach that continues the hot streak.

A futuristic, squad-based tactical strategy game with a strong storyline, *Away Team* puts you in command of an elite Federation squad designed to infiltrate alien worlds. Stealth and cunning are your major weapons, but you'll also use phasers and tricorders, not to mention the Vulcan nerve pinch and an enhanced mind meld.

Each of 18 missions begins with a briefing, then selection of a small squad from 17 specialists. Early missions are deceptively easy; you can blow right through, blasting anything and still be successful. But later, as missions toughen and stealth becomes imperative, you'll wish you'd spent more time on your sneaking skills.

It's a compelling game with a novel approach. The squad-based tactics should even



■ *Away Team* is the latest in a string of fine *Star Trek* games — isn't that a sign of the Apocalypse?

savvy strategy gamers who wouldn't otherwise give a hoot for the show. — John Lee

■ **NextGen** ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** Comparison to *Commandos* is inevitable, and even though this dirty dozen carries phasers, it's a terrific, enjoyable challenge.

# Star Wars: Battle for Naboo

■ Platform: PC ■ Publisher: LucasArts ■ Developer: Factor 5

Like a bowl of four-gram chili with a side of rings, *Star Wars Episode I* continues to revisit us in less-than-delightful ways. *Star Wars: Battle for Naboo* is so routine it could easily have come from a "Star Wars Game Generator" Java applet.

You take control of Gaiyn Sykes, a spunky young man in Queen Amidala's Royal Security Forces. Through the game's 15 levels you'll get to pilot seven different crafts, all of which handle exactly the same.

Controlling the various speeders and bombers is nearly impossible with a digital pad or mouse, so you're

advised to have a quality joystick or analog pad. There are, of course, various hidden goodies, but secret ships and levels, but these extras face the same problem as the rest of the game: The graphics suck.

Almost identical to the N64 version, *Battle for Naboo* requires a 3D accelerator, but we're not sure why. You won't find any gorgeous lighting, textures, or particle effects. There's no multiplayer option, which might be a blessing, and



■ Visually dull and lacking any depth, *Battle for Naboo* is a waste of time

the whole thing is over pretty quickly, which is definitely a blessing. There are worse games for PC, but few less inspired. — Jim Preston

■ **NextGen** ★★★★★

**Bottom Line:** Safe and bland, this is the sort of game *Ewoks* would love.



# Letters

Write up your alley

## REQUIEM FOR INDREMA

→ In referring to the Indrema on page 68 of NG 04/01, you write "Unlike current DVRs, which sell for \$299 and up (plus a \$299 subscription fee for TiVo)..." This is not correct. The fee for TiVo is \$10 a month or a one-time \$199 lifetime membership. The only reason I'm being nitpicky is because I'm sure other Next Gen readers are tech-heads and I'd hate for anyone to not buy a great product like TiVo because of erroneous data on the subscription fee.

**Tony Plummer**  
Via email

Thanks for pointing out what was obviously a typo. The editor was first stuck with 10 pins, then 299 so he'd better appreciate the difference.

As for the rest, our Indrema coverage generated a surprising amount of mail, both pro and con. The following is a representative sampling, although all of this was almost immediately rendered moot (or prescient, depending on which letter you're reading):

→ Well, I guess I should say thanks for the Indrema article. No one else has given this thing any coverage. Unfortunately, the article only reinforced my original thought, that being: They can't be serious, can they? Who the heck in their right mind

would fund this doomed project? Sega can't make the magnificent Dreamcast fly but these guys think they can swing this tacky Linux toy? The box is ugly, the business model is non-existent, and the games in the screenshots are mediocre at best. This thing makes the Nuon, Phillips CDi, Nintendo Virtual Boy, and other game industry roadkill look brilliant by comparison. I'll be impressed if they even get the thing launched at all, much more so if they manage to last six months before going completely bankrupt.

**Robert Nekio**  
Via email

→ I just read your article on Indrema. I thought it is a truly interesting concept. Indrema aims at making money on certification (but that will not be mandatory for game developers), hardware licensing (shades of 3DO?), and content distribution. The article does not explain how they will make money on that last revenue stream. What exclusive content are they producing that Internet users will be willing to spend money to obtain? Finally, the target audience is composed of hackers and pirates. Thus, Indrema wishes to make money with people who are aiming at not spending any. In the end, this looks like a very well conceived April Fool's joke.

If not, pinch me somebody.  
**Pascal Bourque**  
Quebec City

→ I was pleasantly surprised to see such complete coverage of the Indrema game console. I've been a huge supporter of Linux and the greater free software movement. A common misconception about open-source, grassroots software is lack of quality. Anyone can participate in this model, just as IBM has done with Linux recently. I agree with Next Gen's prediction that copyrighted material and lesser-quality applications will be widely available as a result of the Indrema development model, but as is the case with Linux development, this is a small cost for what is gained from using free software. The edges might be rough for a while, but putting the power to develop a game console application into the hands of any person who is willing and able to try will have amazing results in the next few years. Viva la penguin!

**Sean Yunt**  
Issaquah, WA

→ First of all Indrema looks cooler than anything out there. PS2 and Xbox don't have jack crap on Indrema in the looks department. Secondly, I don't see how you guys could list the possibility of an AO-rated

game as a negative for this system. If Indrema embraced those publishers who agreed to make great AO-rated games — with cool characters, great gameplay, and a great story line, not just meaningless sex — they could knock Sony and Microsoft out of the box overnight. Some are ashamed to admit it, but everybody wants AO-rated games! Message to Indrema: You can take the lead baby, all you gotta do is reach out and grab it!

**Ray Jenkins**  
Via email

Alas, here's the official word, directly from the Indrema web site: "On Friday, April 6, 2001, Indrema Corporation was terminated. This decision marked the end of a prolonged and unsuccessful attempt to secure subsequent round funding [sic] to support continued operation. Our vision to empower independent game developers to take control of their future and redefine the next generation of interactive entertainment lives on in the hearts of many hopeful and ambitious creators, artists, and innovators. The revolution will continue without us..." And so the little console that could, became the little console that never was. Indrema, R.I.P.



■ Take a good, long, last look at the Indrema prototype — you may never see its like again

→ I have a small complaint about your review of *ATV Off-Road Fury*. You gave the game a good review, but your reference to ATVs as "tiny death machines" is completely unfair. I have ridden ATVs for 15 years and I am still alive. In those years the only injury I've sustained was a burn on my leg from wearing shorts while riding. Most of my friends and family ride, and of all those people only one has broken a bone. The only reason ATVs are dangerous is because people who don't know their limits and the limits of their quads do stupid things. I'm not going to do anything rash like cancel my subscription, seeing as you guys are the only game magazine worth reading, but I would appreciate it if you retracted your statement about ATVs. I've never once seen you refer to a racecar as a "hulk of speeding destruction" or a motorcycle as a "rocket of doom." I'm sure other *ATV* gamers would appreciate an apology to our sport, seeing as they get enough bad press already. Thank you for your time and keep up the excellent work.

Kevin Miner  
Via email

My my, but we had no idea there was an *ATV* Anti-Defamation League. Your opinion is duly noted, although we do point out that according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, in 1998 (the last year for which complete data was listed) there were 70,200 *ATV*-related injuries, including 317 deaths. On the other hand, just for the sake of comparison, that same year also saw 95,239 injuries from trampolines (although there have only been 11 trampoline fatalities total since 1990). So in all fairness, these statistics point out what most of us already know: True idiots can get hurt doing anything. And actually, it's worth pointing out that most *ATV* manufacturers and retailers offer driving and safety courses to *ATV* purchasers, usually for free, which is many other product companies do.

→ I consider myself fortunate because just about a year ago I landed a job with an airline. With my job comes the benefit

## BE JUST LIKE JOHN

→ I was reading the article you did on *Id Software* in the "How To Start Your Own Game Company" feature in *NG* 03/01, and I loved it! But what I loved more was the Quake III *Jersey* John Carmack was wearing on page 68 of that story. My question to you is where can I get one of those!!! I am a Quake III freak — all I do is play Quake III (Unreal too). I gotta have one. Please tell me where I can get one. I'll do anything!

Tony S.  
Via email

John Carmack's Quake III jersey was originally a custom one-off. Carmack owned one, and no one else did. Thankfully, though, that's no longer the case. They can be ordered online from the Minnesota Pro Shop ([www.minnesotaproshop.com/actionimprints/index.html](http://www.minnesotaproshop.com/actionimprints/index.html)). With your personalized name on the back, they run a cool \$110, plus shipping, but last time we checked there was a sale for 25% off — if you hurry, it might still be going on.



■ If you want a Quake III hockey jersey like John Carmack's (and you've got the bucks), we know just where to look.

of, let's say, first-class travel to Japan for about \$75. This month I plan to go there and visit every gaming-related place possible. There is only one problem: I have never been there nor do I know anybody from there so I was hoping that someone from you guys can give some direction on what places to visit. Thank you in advance for your help!

Robert Deni  
Via email

Let's see... good places to find games in all of Japan? That's a little broad, but just limiting ourselves to Tokyo (which is plenty big enough, trust us), you might start with the Shinjuku district, which has a number of large arcades. Shibuya also has nice arcades, but they're elaborate and kind of expensive (with games in the \$2 range). The electronic playground of Akhabara, however, is the mecca for console gamers everywhere — you literally can't throw a rock without hitting a game or electronics store. Akhabara can be a rather confusing place, but you can find most anything game-related there.

→ Damn you people. Now that you mentioned that the fish is in every issue I've spent the last four hours looking for that slimy punk in all my back issues. You've ruined my life! Sob...

Owen Humphreys  
Via email

Actually, the fish first appeared in *NG* 07/00, and now hides in our pages every month.

→ Thanks for the great News Bytes, always a pleasure. In my humble opinion, Sony has played EA for fools, getting them to help *Bury Dreamcast* when Sony knew this would lead to Sega and EA going tete-a-tete on software. What were the strategists at EA thinking, if they were thinking at all? I bet now they are thinking Xbox. Hmm... Microsoft buying EA? Take that, Sony! As for Sega thinking of developing for GameCube — I don't know. Yamauchi-san is a powerhouse with an elephant's memory, as witnessed by his sharp words for EA's pals at Square (or at least what's left of them besides the FF team).

Glin33bx  
Via email

It has been interesting to watch how the industry has been reacting to Sega's imminent entry into the third-party game market. You bring up a good point about EA, though the company's reasons for ignoring *Dreamcast* remain somewhat hazy to this day. Sega is already working on *Sonic* for Game Boy Advance, so the company is more likely to become a Nintendo licensee than you think. While Yamauchi does have a long memory, Nintendo would be foolish to let Sega go to the competition. Content remains king, and right now, Xbox, PS2, and GameCube will all benefit from Sega's support.

→ Just wanted to thank you guys for having the most honest game mag, and sticking to your game reviews. If I'm going to buy a game, it had better get at least three stars from you guys (just rented *The Bouncer* — awful). I'm 25, so it's nice to read a mag that knows that games aren't just for kids. I'm a diehard PS2 fan, but I recently got a *Dreamcast* to play PS0, mainly (awesome game). Does Sony know that online play is the future of gaming? My cable outlet has been beside my PS2 since I got it at launch. What's talking them so long? Can they say *NHL 2002* online? *Timesplitters*? It's too bad *Dreamcast* is dying, because in a lot of respects Sega is way ahead of everyone else. Anyway, thanks for the best magazine!

Terry Rebinsky  
Via email

Your guess is as good as ours as to when (or perhaps, even, if) Sony will ever get an online gaming network in place. Indeed, it's become something of the industry's Loch Ness Monster — rumors abound, and a few people claim to have seen it in the distance, but no one can confirm or deny its existence. The last word was that Sony was working with Sega to bring something online, but no one really knows. We expect Sony will present more of its online plan at E3.



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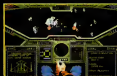
PC ■ TURBIDGRAFX-16 ■ GENESIS ■ NEO GEO ■ NINTENDO ■ ARCADE

## June 1990

Nintendo takes on all corners in the living room and the courtroom

→ The industry was on an upswing in 1990. NEC's TurboGrafx-16, which existed in three different forms simultaneously in Japan, was doing well, and Sega's Genesis was second only to NES in sales. Then came SNK's Neo Geo, a home console that accepted the same giant cartridges as SNK's arcade machines. The stumbling block was the price: \$399 for the console and one controller, and an additional \$200 for another controller and a cartridge.

But the undeniable leader was Nintendo, which would sell over 7 million NES consoles, 60 million NES cartridges, 3 million Game Boys, and 9 million Game Boy carts. Nintendo also kept the legal system in business, suing Codemasters for making the Power Pak (known in the U.S. as the Game Genie).



■ **Wing Commander** established Chris Roberts as an elite game designer, a status he enjoys to this day

Nintendo also attempted to outlaw game rentals on a technicality, suing Blockbuster for copyright infringement after the rental franchise photocopied instruction manuals. Nintendo won the lawsuit, but rather than ceasing to offer games for rent, Blockbuster and other rental agencies simply began rewriting the instructions in their own words. Game rentals continued, as they do to this day.

## What we were playing

What to play while waiting for SNES

### ■ THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND



■ System: PC  
■ Publisher: LucasArts

### ■ SPLATTERHOUSE



■ System: TurboGrafx-16  
■ Publisher: Namco/NEC

### ■ MEGAMAN 3



■ System: NES  
■ Publisher: Capcom

### ■ PSYCHOSIS



■ System: TurboGrafx-16  
■ Publisher: Naicat Soft

### ■ M.U.L.E.



■ System: NES, others  
■ Publisher: Mindscape

## 1990

### Top Ten Alternative Albums

**Violator**  
I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got  
Blue Sky Mining  
Deep  
Blind Me To Habitual  
Brick by Brick  
Automatic  
Bloodfisting  
Some Friendly  
Goodbye Jumbo

Depeche Mode  
Sinead O'Connor  
Midnight Oil  
Peter Murphy  
Jane's Addiction  
Pop Pop  
The Jesus and Mary Chain  
Concrete Blonde  
Charlatans U.K.  
World Party



## ...and in the real world

■ Microsoft ships Windows 3.0, which incorporates support for more than 640K memory, enables over 18 colors to be displayed, and sports a retooled user interface. Widely considered the first successful Windows, it would ship over 10 million units.

■ The Hubble space telescope is launched into orbit seven years late and at a cost of \$2.5 billion — nearly \$2 billion over budget. Amazingly, things got worse: It became immediately apparent that one of the telescope's mirrors is

flawed, resulting in blurry images and a drastically reduced depth of field.



■ Tim Berners-Lee, a researcher at CERN, a physics laboratory in Geneva, develops HyperText Markup Language (HTML), as well as the fundamentals of URLs and HTTP. He would go on to design the first publicly available web server in 1991 and would found the W3 Consortium. Unconfirmed reports also credit him with originating the phrase "You've got mail."

■ Africanized honey bees, often called "killer" bees for their aggressiveness and tendency to sting in vast numbers, are found on U.S. soil for the first time in the town of Hidalgo, TX. Attempts to satiate them with Cheerios fail miserably.

■ After a decade of conflict between environmentalists and the timber industry, the Northern Spotted Owl is added to the Federal Threatened Species List, thus designating vast areas of old-growth forest in the Pacific Northwest as off-limits to logging.



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Dreamcast

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